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HISTORY

DUBLIN REVIEW

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FRANCE SINCE THE WAR

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YEARS OF CHANGE

The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris

THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH

Lancelot Sheppard

FORMS OF THE APOSTOLATE

John Fitzsimons

EXISTENTIALISM AFTER TWELVE YEARS

John Cruickshank

WRITING, THE THEATRE, THE CINEMA, MUSIC, PAINTING AND ARCHITECTURE IN POST-WAR FRANCE

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THE
DUBLIN REVIEW

NUMBER 473

Summer 1957

France Since the War



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A Message From the Ambassador

IT is particularly gratifying to me that THE DUBLIN REVIEW should have decided to devote, this summer, a special number to France. Very often our country which, geographically, is so near, is somewhat misunderstood by our British friends. Either they think of the past, of our classical culture, of our eventful history, or their thoughts turn to the charm of our land for the tourist or to some of the more spectacular and superficial happenings in our life. Many are not aware of what has been achieved in France since 1945.

Spiritual and intellectual values remain the key to a nation's soul. It would be wrong to assume that today these values have lost any of their vitality. On the contrary, the war and the liberation led to an extraordinary surge of ideas and trends. The social and intellectual upheaval polarized trends which during the 'thirties had remained dispersed and freed forces until then unknown. At first the result was a measure of chaos, but now, twelve years later, it is possible to discern the main lines of the evolution, or at least its main landmarks, and to gauge the future.

The present issue of THE DUBLIN REVIEW underlines the various aspects of French intellectual evolution since the war and strives, as far as possible, to present a balance sheet of the different fields of intellectual activity. French literature, philosophy, art, religion and history are dealt with by eminent authorities in these subjects.

I could not and would not infringe upon their domain, for the aim is to produce an appraisal by British observers and not to say what the French think about themselves.

It is simply for me a great pleasure to see presented, in a readily accessible manner, the essence of France's effort, or rather of the French cultural revival, over the past ten years. In spite of difficulties of various kinds, France has continued to live intensely and to convey a message to the world. The era of great achievements is not over, notably in the political field. To take one example, the world at large knows the part my country has taken

in the promotion of European ideas and the setting up of European structures.

These developments have been accompanied by a scientific and economic revival which gives added substance to our national life. ■

I believe and hope that its readers will appreciate the effort made by THE DUBLIN REVIEW to give them, if not a balance sheet, at least a comprehensive review which will help them to get an idea of France and the French today. This undertaking deserves to be welcomed, and I wish to express my warm gratitude to all who have shared in the task.

London, 28 June 1957.

JEAN CHAUVEL,
Ambassador of France.

An Editorial Note

THIS number of THE DUBLIN REVIEW surveys the achievement of the French in many different fields since the Second World War. The Liberation was—or so it seemed—a time of new beginnings,

*Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.*

What has come of all the hope and expectation of those now legendary days? Many more pages than these would be needed to give adequate answers and explanations; all that has been attempted here is to present the main impressions in the minds of those who have been asked to contribute. Each essay is of its nature personal, and, although there is a unity, because the writers share the same broad criteria, differences of opinion, variations of judgement, may be found among them. All the contributions have by intention been sought and found on this side of the Channel; even Cardinal Feltrin's lecture, here printed for the first time, was delivered in London; and it will be seen that most of the books noticed are from British writers and have been published in London. This was the plan, as M. Chauvel remarks; to see what some of the writers and critics in this country think about the French, not what the French think about themselves.

MICHAEL DERRICK ■

THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH

Recent Developments in France

By LANCELOT SHEPPARD

THE events of the early part of this century leading to the separation of Church and State and the suppression of the religious Orders put the finishing touches to the process of secularization which had been going on in France ever since 1789: what vestiges there remained of a country officially Christian were swept away. The many and acute problems thus created were met by the Church in a variety of ways, some moderately successful, others failures, but whether successful or not they could only deal with a difficult situation at the periphery. The attempt was made to form, so to say, a self-contained community within the State, with its own schools (the *écoles libres*), universities, newspapers, charitable organizations and so on,¹ but in practice such an overwhelmingly difficult task was doomed to failure.

With the war of 1939-45 and the German occupation there emerged in stark reality a problem which had only been partially realized beforehand. It began to be seen clearly that the Church was not communicating the Christian message to great sections of the population; the industrial workers in the great cities were almost wholly uninfluenced by the Church, the agricultural workers in many districts of France were in process of being lost to the faith.

Some of these things emerged with clinical clarity from Abbé Godin's and Abbé Daniel's *La France pays de mission?* and their conclusions were generally confirmed by priests who returned

¹ Some of the attempts to set up confessional counterparts to the ordinary institutions of modern life were hardly worth the money and effort expended on them. Thus the *bon cinéma* of the years between 1918 and 1939 could never be taken seriously. Abbé Bethléhem's monthly list of *Livres à lire ou à proscrire* was regarded by most informed Catholics as a joke.

from the prison camps of Germany (Fr Perrin, S.J., author of *Priest Worker in Germany*, is an instance) and by the observations of those who had remained in the country during the German occupation. It has been established that in Paris, for example, twelve per cent of the baptized population goes to Mass on Sundays, but in the industrial quarters of the city the figure falls to one per cent. In other large conglomerations similar, or slightly better or slightly worse, figures are to be found, though there are of course parts of the country where, as in Tourcoing or some districts of Brittany, something like thirty per cent go to Mass.

It would require much more than a long article to analyse the conditions leading to this state of affairs. If due allowance be made for the danger of over-simplification, the problem of de-christianization, what Père Desqueyrat has called the apostasy of modern times,¹ can be summarily ascribed to the following causes. It must be borne in mind, however, that it is not confined to France, or, indeed, to the West, and it is not, paradoxically, merely a Christian problem. It is felt by all religions. It derives in part from the industrial revolution which, while inflicting immense hardship on the industrial worker, has, in the course of years, in combination with other causes, gradually resulted in an increasing realization among them of their own potentialities; at the same time it has crystallized their opposition to the middle class (equated with the managerial and governing class). The identification of Christianity with the bourgeois class and mentality in the minds of the workers has therefore created an opposition to religion which, with the development of what can only be called a *mystique ouvrière*, has brought about a state of affairs by which for a worker to be a practising Catholic amounts to his abandoning his own class.

That is one part of the problem. The other, inseparably bound up with it, is the difficulty of inserting the Christian message in our modern technocratic civilization, which appears to create an a-religious type of humanity. Nevertheless, it is probable that, once the enthusiasm aroused by technical progress has to some degree calmed down, important and inescapable human problems will once more assume an urgency and require to be faced, problems to which no technical process can provide an answer; thus once more humanity will discover a need for religion. 'We should not forget that grace is unpredictable; at the end of the

¹ H. Desqueyrat, *La crise religieuse des temps présents*.

eighteenth century nothing gave grounds for foretelling the conversion in any great numbers of the then governing classes; at the end of the nineteenth century there was no cause to prophesy the emergence of a solid Catholic intelligentsia.¹ Though complacency is to be avoided, the vitality of a Catholicism which can face these new situations as they arise must be clearly recognized.¹

Though this twofold problem is not confined to the Church in France, it emerges more acutely because awareness of it is probably keener there than elsewhere:

The difficulties encountered by Catholicism have resulted within the Church in France in a crisis and much heart-searching. To carry out her mission the Church becomes incarnate in successive civilizations. Periodically she must re-discover a more faithful expression of Christ's message which has been compromised by her ties with human society. In our days Pius XI, the great pope of modern times, a quarter of a century ago set the course for her liberation: envisaging both the sociological and geographical aspects of the problem, to which many Catholics are even nowadays still blind, he offered the solution of Catholic Action and native clergy (this last having already been formulated by Benedict XV)...²

Any appreciation of the Church in France at the present time must therefore deal largely with this problem of 'dechristianization' and the steps that are being taken to meet it, namely the efforts at adaptation and renewal, preceded by the great work of *ressourcement* and preparatory theological thinking that is an absolute necessity in any undertaking of this nature. Some of these efforts have received considerable publicity outside France and have been judged superficially on insufficient evidence; the impression has been given that France was in the grip of a great and beneficent spiritual revolution (if you sympathized) or that the Church was trying all sorts of experiments which were daring if not positively dangerous (if you disliked what was going on). The truth lies, as so often, probably about midway between the two, though there is no doubt about the impact of the Church in these post-war years being far greater and more effective than it was even as recently as twenty years ago, and it is so because of the work of

¹ R. Rouquette, *Études*, April 1957, p. 129.

² Adrien Dansette, *Destin du Catholicisme français, 1926-1956*, p. 7 (Paris, 1957). This lively and well-informed book has been praised by Fr Rouquette as objective and impartial; he adds: 'La réussite est étonnante et cet essai pourra être, pour les pasteurs et les militants laïques, l'occasion de ce que l'on appelle aujourd'hui une auto-critique et qui est, depuis longtemps, pratiqué sous le nom d'examen de conscience.' (*Études*, April 1957, p. 127). Throughout this article I am much indebted to M. Dansette's book for facts and treatment.

men like Abbé Godin, Fr Perrin and a host of others who have been criticized for their methods.

There were signs of a renaissance before the war. It was realized by men like Maritain and Mounier that Catholics could no longer 'contract out' from modern civilization, that it was useless to look back to a form of mediaeval society where all was in dependence on the Church. A Christian *élite* was required that, instead of regretting a social order that no longer existed, must endeavour to direct modern civilization in such a way that it became authentically Christian. Mounier's *Esprit* was founded just about the time that the *Correspondant*, the old organ of the liberal Catholics, ceased to appear; if it did not carry on the latter's traditions, it attempted nonetheless to contribute to the work of building a new civilization.

The influence of men like Mounier and Maritain from 1932 to 1939 was extensive in the Catholic Action movements which are at the origin of the modern missionary movement in France. Catholic intellectuals, and particularly the university men among them, in the following years were to exercise increasing influence in the Church, either as individuals or collectively, by means of such organizations as the *Paroisse universitaire* and the *Centre catholique des intellectuels français*. This state of ferment was not confined to a section of educated laity; it included also the younger clergy. Vocations from Catholic Action movements (*Jocistes*, *Jacistes*, etc.), increasing numbers from the Lycée rather than the Petit séminaire, men who during the war had come to maturity in the *maquis*, brought a new outlook to the priesthood. In some cases there was possibly excessive impatience with past methods and outlook; the tension that resulted between the older and younger members of the clergy might well have acted as a heavy brake on the forward movement of the Church. That it did not do so was due very largely to one man, the late Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, who, with admirable qualities of leadership, was able by his long experience as a bishop and theologian to reassure the older, more conservative clergy, and by his sympathy and encouragement—for he was acutely aware of the gravity of the problems to be faced—to direct the energies and impatience of the younger men to the spheres where they were most needed. His influence was paramount in the establishment of the Mission de Paris and pervasive in nearly all movements that, with their roots in the unhappy years of the occupation, sprang up after the war.

The new type of priest that has emerged in France is very different from the traditional Curé of fifty or even twenty-five years ago. His manner and deportment have lost that primness which seemed to give him an eighteenth-century stamp, his dress and whole manner of life betray his preoccupations—to belong to the people to whom he ministers, his preference for working as a member of a team and his keen awareness of poverty and social injustice.

It is too early yet to establish the balance sheet of the priest-worker movement, to assess the rights and wrongs of the affair, to apportion the blame for what on the face of it was a failure. The transformation of the priest-workers into priests of the working-class mission was certainly not accomplished without strong feelings of bitterness among those chiefly concerned, and the fact that it was common knowledge that the situation had been provoked by denunciations to Rome on the part of the extreme conservative wing of French Catholics did nothing to ease matters.¹ If it did nothing else the priest-worker movement showed clearly the crying need for the evangelization of the industrial workers and the difficulty of applying old methods in such a milieu. The experiment failed partly because it was not thought out beforehand, and thus the full implications of identification by the priest with his milieu had not been foreseen with sufficient clarity.

La France pays de mission? on its first publication provoked considerable criticism of the parish as the unit of Church life; as years went by it came to be seen that the parish and the extra-parochial forms of apostolate were complementary. It was certainly necessary that men like Abbé Godin and many others should devote themselves to the masses who were untouched by the parish, but it was no less necessary that the parish should be capable of receiving those who had been evangelized, should attract those whom it was able to reach and, most important of all, keep those who formed its nucleus.

The concept of the *paroisse communautaire* which was born of these pre-occupations has its origins in an experiment anterior to them by something like twenty years. In 1922, in a poor suburb of Lyon, Abbé Remilleux put up a chapel—it was only a hut standing among a great number of other huts used as dwellings—which was followed in due course by a church. By his revolutionary

¹ The details of this sorry affair may be found admirably and dispassionately set out in Dansette, op. cit., pp. 165-305.

methods, his abolition of the 'chink of money round the altar', his novel and lively presentation of the liturgy Abbé Remilleux evolved a formula that was to be developed in succeeding years.

He abolished all collections in church, offerings on the occasions of marriages, funerals, or baptisms, and seat money. All, whatever their means, were treated alike: 'all Christians, all brothers, all equal in church as before God'. The parish was financed by the faithful placing their anonymous contributions in a box at the end of the church. At the end of a month the parish bulletin disclosed how much had been subscribed and how it had been spent, in detail. In this way a real parochial community grew up and was knit together, achieving a sense of responsibility, a community nourished by common worship and united in common effort. The meaning of the acts of worship was made to live: baptism, before which the parents were instructed regarding its implications and meaning, took place before the Sunday Mass; first communions and marriages also were made the concern of the whole parish, the Christian community. In this way Abbé Remilleux built up a vital parish. That his work exerted less influence than was to be expected outside this parish was due perhaps to certain defects of method and approach, particularly in connexion with social questions; in this sphere he has been charged with paternalism and clericalism, but he was a pioneer, and pioneers must be forgiven some mistakes.

Père Michonneau of the *Fils de la Charité*¹ developed the notion of the *paroisse communautaire* from the point at which it had been left by Abbé Remilleux. In addition to many of the methods evolved by the latter, Père Michonneau lays great emphasis on the community of priests running a parish—'no parish community without a priestly community'. In his parish of the Sacré Coeur at Colombes the three principal elements that contributed to his success seem to have been the influence of Abbé Godin, the collaboration of an excellent team of curates and the exceptional conditions under which he began the work.²

There are other communities of priests at work, particularly in the countryside, but the 'crisis of the parish' can be solved by no ready-made formula. Canon Boulard has studied it in his

¹ The Fils de la Charité are a congregation for home missionary work founded by Père Anizan (1853–1928) after he had been unjustly deposed from the position of superior of the Frères de Saint Vincent de Paul. Cf. Gabriel Bard, *Jean Emile Anizan* (Paris, 1945).

² See Michonneau, *Revolution in a City Parish* (London, Blackfriars).

Problèmes missionnaires de la France rurale, though the problem is even more acute in the large towns. French parishes evolved when the horse was the common method of transport: nowadays in the country they would benefit by greater concentration, as has been attempted in the diocese of Chambéry; in the towns, with the increase and great movement of population, they no longer correspond with social conditions, and are so large as to be unwieldy or impossible to organize by reason of the great diversity of elements that they embrace.

The difficulties created by the parochial system, an organization that in some respects is out of date, are experienced also in worship. Attempts to remedy the increasing de-christianization of the population have naturally brought the liturgy of the Church under examination. Here, possibly, more enduring work has been done than in any other field. It is true that exaggerations have occurred, bold experiments have been tried, and that some of the results have not been very happy. Among the clergy three kinds of 'liturgists' have been described: there is the *doux esthète gregorisant*, . . . *sorte de vieille fille en soutane tout éprise de chasubles gothiques ou bien . . . espèce de maniaque amoureux de chinoiserie rubricales*. This type is becoming rare in France. Then there are the mature men of a certain age, endeavouring to keep worship as it was thirty or fifty years ago, preserving in the Mass 'its character of strictly private priestly devotion' lest that of the faithful be upset. Lastly, there is the young priest, concerned primarily to gather Christian people together in an act of worship that shall be an authentic expression of their Christian spirit and sense of community. Until he 'can celebrate Mass at a kitchen table and all in French' (P. Bouyer's remark) he introduces all sorts of 'reforms': extraordinary paraliturgies are multiplied, commentaries during Mass obtrude throughout the rite, and any device is tried that is novel.

There is possibly an atom of truth in these three thumbnail sketches, but none of them is representative of the great French liturgical movement as it has grown up since the war. Here again it originated during the occupation. The formation of the *Centre de Pastorale liturgique*, under Dominican auspices, but from the beginning with the collaboration of both secular and regular clergy, was symptomatic of the trend to be taken by the movement. The chief emphasis is on pastoral applications. If before the war, and still nowadays in some places, the liturgical movement

could earn the epithet of *monastic*, such is not the case in France today.

The C.P.L. has been and is both popular and scientific. In addition to its review, *La Maison-Dieu*, one of the most lively and at the same time learned and well-informed of liturgical periodicals, it has produced popular manuals and series, organized congresses and in general inspired the promotion of pastoral liturgy throughout the country. Dialogue Mass is now commonplace in the parishes of France and a real effort has been made to bring the congregation, as it has been said, 'into the heart of the Mass', and to make it both the vehicle and the food of the people's faith. The introduction of a Ritual largely in French has helped to make the administration of the sacraments authentic gestures of Christian community worship, means of instruction as well as of grace. Not all problems have been solved, not all difficulties have disappeared by any means, but in this essential of Christianity there seems in France a very real inspiration at work throughout the country.

The bishops have encouraged the movement. The *Directoire pour la pastorale des sacrements* (1951) was followed in 1956 by a similar work on the Mass. Both are at pains, while restraining irresponsible elements, to ensure popular participation and to make the liturgy the living worship of a Christian community.

None of the various developments, described above, has occurred without bitter criticism from more conservative quarters; in 1955 Paul Claudel, shortly before his death, spoke no doubt for others besides himself when he published his article *La messe à l'envers*. Probably he had never been present at one of the community Masses which he derided and, at all events, on his main point the bishops in their *Directoire* have shown conclusively that he was mistaken.

The liturgical movement has certainly exerted very considerable influence throughout the greater part of France, but it must be borne in mind that it is still in its beginnings. It is closely connected with the various manifestations of Catholic Action, since these movements are almost entirely in the hands of the younger generation and it is they who experience to the full the need for a worship that is an authentic expression of their lives and work as members of the mystical body. To that extent the old individualism is dying, but there are still many districts, particularly in the centre and south of France, that are practically untouched by recent developments.

One reason for this state of affairs is to be found in the shortage of clergy. Here again there are extremes of local variation which are due in part to the social milieu from which candidates for ordination are drawn and also to regional factors. Very roughly, there are 21,000 priests working among 18,000,000 of rural inhabitants and 7200 priests for an urban population of 24,000,000. In 1946 the proportion of secular priests per 10,000 inhabitants was 9.7 for the whole of France, but in Marseilles the figure was 6.5 and in Paris 2.9. In the de-christianized rural districts the need for priests is felt very acutely. Thus in the diocese of Carcassonne the number of priests has decreased from 632 in 1900 to 287 in 1953. Not only is the distribution of priests between the dioceses unequal but within them there is often defective use of the available manpower. In some, for example, more priests are employed in teaching or supervision in schools than are working in Catholic Action or as chaplains to technical schools or apprenticeship centres. Thus, so long as recruitment figures, which appear to have reached a fairly uniform pattern, remain stable, a better employment and distribution of available resources might well ease a situation that in some parts of the country, particularly in the south, has become acute.

Since the war vocations to the regular clergy have shown an increase; with the closing of their noviciates and schools at the beginning of the century the religious Orders suffered more severely than the secular clergy. But since 1913 there has been a gradual and continuing development, so that at present religious are almost as numerous as they were before the troubles of 1900-1905. Consequently, in total number of clergy France can be compared by no means unfavourably with other Catholic countries. The clergy are certainly not numerous enough, in relation to their total number and an increased population, for the tasks which arise as a consequence of the new missionary movement, yet to a very large extent this is due to unequal distribution and faulty use arising from an out-of-date conception of their role and an obsolescent form of ecclesiastical administration.

Comparatively few religious, save for the *Fils de la Charité*, are working in parishes; they are active of course in many other spheres. But in France religious stand particularly for the great work of adaptation that is going on in many of the Orders and Congregations. The fundamentals of religious life remain the same for every age, but their expression in the Church has down

the centuries emerged in many forms. It is realized that old institutions stand in constant need of adaptation, and that new forms of the religious life are also needed to meet the urgent needs and the aspirations of the present. Of these the two most characteristic are the Little Brothers of Jesus and the *Frères Missionnaires des Campagnes*. The former look for their inspiration to Fr Charles de Foucauld, the hermit of the Sahara, and both by the rapidity of their recruitment and the simplicity of their life remind one of the early Franciscans. Their conception of the religious life is based on contemplation practised in the world in strict poverty, this last understood in the sense that Fr Charles de Foucauld understood it, namely, as the poverty of the poorest workman, with no security save that of unemployment pay when work fails. Consequently the Little Brothers go out to work in factories or on the land, live in workers' dwellings, which are rented and not owned, and possess no capital. This is the basis of their contemplative life, which is nourished by prayer in common (in French) and the penance and austerity inseparable from such an existence.

The *Frères Missionnaires des Campagnes* confine themselves, as their title indicates, to work among the rural population. They were founded in 1943 by Père Epagneul, at La Houssaye-en-Brie, and by 1956 numbered about 120 all told. More than half are priests, or preparing for the priesthood, the others being known as auxiliaries. The priories are based on parishes and under the authority of the bishops. They take charge of a group of isolated country parishes, assuring thus a community life for their members combined with the ordinary working of a parish. The auxiliaries share the life of the priories (the divine office and other religious exercises) and perform the necessary manual labour for the support of the house, undertaking also catechism classes, running clubs, organizing Catholic action movements and so on. At present ten such, six of them founded since 1952, are in existence.

Similar work, though not confined to the countryside, is being done by the Premonstratensian canons. The two abbeys of Mondaye and Frigolet, at opposite ends of France, have organized houses (at Nantes, Longpont and elsewhere) using the formula of *prieuré-paroisse* as the basis of their work. These houses, a return in substance to the idea of the canonical life of the clergy, that is, priests engaged on pastoral work living a full religious life with observances (choir office, the common life) adapted to the needs

of their work, may well prove to be one answer to the difficulty of staffing the many parishes in the French countryside now without a pastor.

The twin phenomena of adaptation and *ressourcement* are to be found at work in most of the Orders and Congregations; and even among those of a strongly conservative outlook, like the Benedictines of the Solesmes Congregation, there have been manifestations of this spirit. From Clervaux, a monastery of this congregation, though situated in Luxembourg and not in France, and Louvain, a monastery of the Belgian congregation, came the inspiration for the foundation of the monastery of *La Vierge des Pauvres*, at Bouricos, in the Landes. It is a return to the simplicity of St Benedict's Rule; corporate as well as personal poverty, the absence of distinction between choir monks and laybrothers—all are monks *tout court*, but not all are priests—and the hope of one day saying the daily offices in French are some features of this new foundation.¹

Among the Discalced Carmelite friars the foundation of the 'desert' house in a former Camaldolese establishment at Roquebrunes has revived once again the eremitic side of their life, while their intellectual work continues in the two French provinces. *Études Carmélitaines*, under Fr Bruno's editorship, continues to confront medicine and mysticism and to deal with other fundamental matters with great profit. It has recently celebrated the silver jubilee of its appearance under his editorship.²

Since the last war it is the Dominicans, particularly those of the Paris province, who have been chiefly in the public eye. There are between five and six hundred of them in France, divided into three provinces. The scope of their activities, ranging from cinema and television to sacred art and liturgy is well indicated by the journals that they publish and the productions of the publishing house, Éditions du Cerf, which they manage. Their position in France today may be compared to that of the Benedictines in the middle of the nineteenth century at the time of Dom Guéranger, or to that of the Jesuits just before the turn of the century. They have collaborated in all the great movements at work in the

¹ A useful appreciation of the monastery at Bouricos and its ideals is to be found in A. M. Henry, 'Un monastère simple', in the Supplement to the *Vie Spirituelle*, 41 (2nd quarter, 1957), pp. 172-98.

² It was founded before the 1914-18 war as a 'house journal' and was concerned principally to defend certain 'traditional' Carmelite theses in connexion with the origin of the Order and the scapular devotion. When these were found to be no longer tenable it emerged as we know it now.

Church in France in the present time. Certain recent episodes, while bringing the names of some of them prominently before the public, may have led to the erroneous conclusion that their whole attitude was merely one of adventure and novelty for its own sake. Such a view ignores the solid achievements of the past twenty years or so. The *Centre de Pastorale liturgique* and its review *La Maison-Dieu* owe much to their inspiration and management; the biblical renewal, closely and very properly connected with the liturgical movement, is greatly indebted to their work at the *École Biblique* at Jerusalem and the publication under their auspices of the excellent modern version the *Bible de Jerusalem*. The patristic movement has by their efforts moved out from exclusively scholarly preserves and been brought to the attention of the informed reader. *Sources chrétiennes*, a long series of patristic texts (fifty volumes to date) published by the *Éditions du Cerf* (here there has been fruitful collaboration with the Jesuits), has been a major factor in this achievement. The series *Rencontres*, among which figured the striking books by Abbés Godin, Daniel and Michonneau, and Canon Boulard have formed, as M. Dansette puts it, 'the breviaries of recent missionary effort'.

So great an achievement was no spontaneous creation. It began with the foundation of *La Vie Spirituelle* in 1919 (it is still appearing and as lively and up to date as ever) and then, in 1928, with *La Vie Intellectuelle*,¹ the latter largely the creation of its second editor, Père Maydieu. There were mistakes, too. *Sept* (1934), the first Catholic periodical to reach a non-Catholic public, in combating fascism did not distinguish clearly enough between the teaching of the Church and the tenets of a political ideology and tended to treat problems not from the point of view of the Christian conscience but from a purely political standpoint. Since the war the *Éditions du Cerf* has collaborated in the foundation of *Vie Catholique* (an illustrated weekly of considerable circulation), *Informations Catholiques internationales* and *Radio-Cinéma*. These publications are under lay control.

It appears that the French Dominicans have today resolved the tension that from the first years of their restoration seemed likely to impair fruitful activity. A similar tension is to be observed in the Church in France today; it exists between the conservative elements whose eyes are fixed on the past and those who feel that it is urgent to interpret or at least to express the Christian message

¹ Since merged with the series *Rencontres*.

in terms of the present, that the Church must be incarnated in the times which we are living. This tension appears clearly in all the movements that have been cursorily examined in this article. And it is well that it does so for it is a sign of vigour and vitality. It is too early yet to assess the achievements of the last two decades; all that can be said, with any degree of certitude, is that the Church in France exhibits manifest signs of life and awareness of the immense problems facing her. Such life and awareness at least gives grounds for hope for the future.

FORMS OF THE APOSTOLATE

The Evolution in France Since 1945

By JOHN FITZSIMONS

THE lay apostolate in France has reached the end of an epoch, and it is debatable whether the new era which is beginning will be characterized by progress or decline. A generation ago a new and fecund principle was introduced which flowered into the various movements of specialized Catholic Action, bringing a new life and a new spirit into the apostolate which is now being dissipated in a cloud of discreet recrimination and a welter of resignations. Worst of all, the J.O.C. which can rightly claim to have been the pioneer of modern forms of the apostolate (was it not dubbed 'ipsa germana forma Actionis Catholicae' by Pope Pius XI himself) now seems to be cast for the role among the youth movements of wrecker in chief. To estimate the validity of this accusation it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the epoch that has ended.

In 1927, when Fr Guerin, inspired by the example of Fr Cardijn in Belgium, founded the first French group of the J.O.C. at Clichy, there was already in existence a Catholic youth movement with a long and venerable history: the *Association catholique de la jeunesse française*. The A.C.J.F. had been founded in 1886 and had emerged from the trials of *Le Sillon*, the First World War and *Action Française* as the standard-bearer of social Catholicism among the youth of France. But its appeal was mainly to students and to the middle class, and the birth of the J.O.C. came at a time when it was preoccupied with making contact with the young worker. After a little hesitation the J.O.C. was accepted into the A.C.J.F. Its efficacy was quickly shown by the prodigious growth of membership, more than 40,000 in three years. The

essence of the J.O.C. was the apostolate of like by like and the realism of its method of training which substituted the three stages of 'See—Judge—Act' for the older formula of the study circle. A contemporary, M. Hourdin, has borne witness to its impact on the Church in France: 'Its action and its methods were for many of us, even in the middle class, a kind of revelation of the apostolate. To some extent our whole Catholic life was transformed by it.' Very soon this became true institutionally as well as personally. In rapid succession other specialized movements (i.e. concerned with a special social group) came into being, the J.A.C. (for rural areas) in 1929, the J.E.C. (for students) in 1930, the J.M.C. (for sailors) in 1932 and the J.I.C. (for the professional classes) in 1936. (All of these, except the J.M.C., were soon followed by their feminine counterparts.) All of them preserved an essential unity as well as regular contact with one another by their federated membership under the umbrella of the A.C.J.F., and thus presented, in the words of the President of the A.C.J.F. in 1933, 'a synthesis which prefigures the world of tomorrow'. The first article of the Statutes of the A.C.J.F. as adopted by the Federal Council on 30 January 1938, summarizes the new forces that were at work in the Church in France:

The A.C.J.F. has:

1. *As end*: to ensure, by grouping young men belonging to different social environments and organized in specialized movements corresponding to each environment, the collaboration of all classes with a view to re-establishing the Christian social order;
2. *As rule*: submission to the authority of the Church and full assent to all the teaching of the Holy See;
3. *As means*: piety—putting the whole of Christianity into the whole of life; study—learning to know the teaching of the Church and its application to the needs of contemporary society; action—organizing, by mutual help and through the different movements of Catholic Action, the Christian conquest of all the milieux of work and of life.

This statement demonstrates both the strength and the weakness of the new apostolate. It spoke of conquest, whereas most Catholic organizations hitherto (especially the great national movements of adults, the *Fédération Nationale Catholique* for men and the *Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique* for women) had been almost purely defensive. It laid stress on education, organization and action which assured it an almost immediate success, both in

its recruitment and in its impact on the life of the nation. Moreover it derived its prestige from its freedom from political affiliations. The chief weakness was that the application of the analogy of the milieu was of only limited validity. There was a well-defined working class which had been the object of sociological analysis and definition from the time of Le Play, and hence the formula, method and techniques of the J.O.C. were perfectly adapted to it. But there was not the same homogeneity among students, and even less among the youth of the professional classes. As for country-dwellers the J.A.C. was careful never to adopt the idea of class but spoke always of *le monde rural*. This was inevitable because it included in its membership everybody engaged in rural pursuits from the sons of farm labourers to the scions of the nobility. However in the first flush of success (and it must be emphasized that the decade that preceded the outbreak of war saw a veritable renaissance of the Church both in industrial towns and in rural areas) all five divisions were assumed to be as distinct and as identifiable as the working class. This error would perhaps have come to light sooner had not the war and the Occupation introduced new preoccupations and new tasks which effectively blocked all development for six years, during which time stress came to be laid on the missionary aspect of the apostolate.

It was obvious in 1945 that the lay apostolate in France could not resume its activities where they had been broken off in September 1939. All had suffered the Occupation and many of the members of the different movements had been active in the Resistance. The spirit of the times was restless, even revolutionary, hostile to organization, fearful of being dragooned, above all seized with the desire to build a new world on the ruins of a society that had perished, the good with the bad, in the nightmare years that had just passed. Moreover the first generation of those who had been formed in the youth movements were now mature adults seeking for new outlets for their apostolic zeal and experience. The most important element of all was the new meaning given to the terms 'mission' and 'missionary'. Cardinal Suhard, whose influence was paramount in this period, noted in his *Spiritual Diary*:

I state a fact when I say our whole population no longer thinks in a Christian way. Between them and a Christian community, there is an abyss. This obliges us to forget ourselves and reach out to them. Such is our true situation. Until now our efforts have

brought few results; even normal Catholic Action has declared itself powerless. It is an 'action geared to Catholics', not an action geared to the pagan world. The house trembles and risks falling if we do not strengthen it by infusing faith in these dechristianized souls. Today they are the majority. Tomorrow they will be a power because they are susceptible to a strong faith which stimulates them. *We do not see how our present Catholic leaders can have any influence on them. To consolidate the Church we need a 'missionary Catholic Action',* for we must reach out to souls in their own environment, with their customs and their good and bad habits. [The italics are ours.]

One must appreciate this attitude if one is to understand the change of terminology in use in post-war Catholic Action, a change which betokened a profound reorientation of thought and approach. It was provoked and crystallized by the report which two Jocist chaplains, Fathers Godin and Daniel, prepared for Cardinal Suhard in 1943 and which was subsequently published under the title *La France, pays de mission?* Their thesis, startling at the time but now a commonplace of the apostolate, was that there were three *pays*: (i) areas which are Christian in mentality and culture, and where the faith is practised—by far the smallest; (ii) areas where the effects of Christian culture and civilization remain but where there is little practice of religion—geographically the largest group; (iii) areas which are pagan—and this demographically is the largest group. Reluctantly the authors arrived at the conclusion that Catholic Action had made little impact on this last group, but they were quick to add that it was not the fault of Catholic Action. It had worked inside the parochial framework and had left the missionary problem almost untouched. (It is interesting to note that, ten years later, Cardinal Feltrin's Lenten Pastoral in 1955 was entitled *L'action missionnaire: un problème qui reste posé*, and in the course of it he wrote of the world of the proletariat 'from which the Church is almost completely absent, which is so closed and so hostile to the Church, and on which the action of her lay members of Catholic Action, however generous and effective it may be, must be declared insufficient'.) Once this situation was realized steps were taken to intensify the missionary efforts of the Church, through the *Mission de France* (founded in 1942 to train priests for missionary work in the most dechristianized regions of town and country) and the *Mission de Paris* (founded by Cardinal Suhard in 1944 to work among the Paris proletariat) both of which operated outside the normal parish, and in the case of the former especially wherever possible the

priests worked in teams. It was from this beginning that the experiment of the priest-workers evolved, but a discussion of its development and ultimate suppression would take us too far afield. Its relevance here is that when the lay apostolate returned to its tasks after the war it was with an emphasis on the missionary aspect which had been lacking in 1939.

One effect of this was shown in the uncertain steps taken by the J.O.C. for the first four or five years after the end of the war. Partly through the revulsion against organization of any kind, partly because a number of trained leaders at both regional and national levels left to provide the cadre of the M.R.P., partly because other trained leaders were preoccupied with building an adult counterpart to the J.O.C., the movement played down organization and became a more or less amorphous body. Its missionary effort was thought of in terms of representation and not in recruitment, while the words most commonly used in its speeches and literature were *témoignage* and *être présent*. The honeymoon period of collaboration with the Communists also contributed to the general confusion.

But the most interesting developments came in the field of adult Catholic Action. Before the war the only organization for workers was the Christian Trade Union (C.F.T.C.), and while it did undoubtedly give a certain amount of spiritual formation to its members its chief function was to be a Trade Union and not to form lay apostles. But this situation changed when members began to leave the J.O.C. as adults, and they decided to have their own apostolic movement. A tentative beginning with the *Ligue Ouvrière Chrétienne* had been made a few years before the war, and this was continued during the Occupation when it was transformed into a family movement and changed its name to *Mouvement Populaire des Familles* (M.P.F.), at the same time amalgamating with its feminine counterpart, the L.O.C.F. It occupied itself almost completely with the material problems, food, clothing, housing, caused by the war and which were if anything accentuated after the Liberation. Its very success contributed to its gradual loss of a distinctively Catholic and apostolic character because, making no denominational condition of membership, the active apostolic Catholics were soon outnumbered in the 200,000 families with which it was in contact. Accordingly in January 1946, at the request of the leaders of the M.P.F., the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops recognized that it could no longer be

accepted as a movement of Catholic Action, although it would still retain its chaplains because the Hierarchy had not lost confidence in it as the means to be used 'for the Christian transformation of the workers' world'. Two years later, when the pressure of material problems had been eased, it was clear that weighty decisions had to be made as to the future direction of the M.P.F. Its leaders chose to abandon the path of a family apostolate and to turn their movement into a political and social revolutionary organization for supporting the demands of the working class. As a sign of this they changed the name to *Mouvement de Libération du Peuple* (M.L.P.), and in October 1949 the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops officially dissociated the Church from any further responsibility in its opinions or activities.

The position then was that there was no movement of the lay apostolate for adult workers, no organized Catholic Action in the most important segment of the missionary field in France. The M.L.P. had ceased to be such precisely because it had become completely preoccupied with problems of the temporal order, whereas the task of Catholic Action is to incarnate the spiritual in the temporal. Up to this point in the history of the lay apostolate in France there had been no attempt made, either on the side of the laity nor of the Hierarchy to lay down strict limits between the spiritual and the temporal. From its earliest days the A.C.J.F. had been committed to 'action sociale et civique' and when the specialized movements came into existence they took over the same purpose, namely the insertion of the spiritual in the temporal. In fact it was understood that this was the specific task of the laity in Catholic Action. Thus Mgr Guerrey, now the Archbishop of Cambrai, in introducing a collection of papal texts on Catholic Action in 1936, wrote: 'As an institution Catholic Action takes its place in a quite different field from those in which associations to foster individual piety and economic and political associations operate . . . The apostolate does not work inside the organization but in the milieu . . . The immediate end towards which the apostolate of each individual in his milieu and the whole organization must tend is *the christianization of activities of the temporal order*.' (Italics in the text.) Ten years later Cardinal Suhard devoted his famous pastoral letter, *Essor ou Declin de l'Eglise*, to an exhaustive discussion of the same theme, showing how the apostolate must follow the 'Law of Incarnation'.

From October 1949 to March 1950 discussions were held

throughout the country to determine what form of Catholic Action should be launched for adult workers. In their meeting of 14-16 March 1950, the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops promulgated the foundation charter of *Action Catholique Ouvrière* (A.C.O.) which was to be independent of all organizations in the temporal order and which was to have three principal ends: (i) the Christian education of the milieu; (ii) the spiritual inspiration of its members; (iii) the collective witness of the love and friendship of Christians in Christ. Thus its purpose was to provide a spiritual training for those Catholics who were active in trade unions, C.F.T.C. or C.G.T. or Third Force, in politics (as members for example of M.R.P.) or in other organizations such as M.L.P. This represented a more strict and rigid division between the spiritual and the temporal than had hitherto been the practice in movements of the apostolate, and might indeed be interpreted as a reaction against the extreme position taken up by M.L.P. At the same time it seemed paradoxical to some observers that while the lay movement of Catholic Action was being disengaged so thoroughly from the temporal, the priest-workers were becoming ever more deeply involved in it. The paradox was ended but the fundamental problem was not solved by the withdrawal of the priest-workers at the beginning of 1954. In March of that same year the journal of A.C.O. publicly expressed regret that A.C.O. and its chaplains had been systematically ignored throughout the whole of the priest-worker experiment.

The task given to A.C.O. was a difficult, almost ambiguous, one, for the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops had stressed that 'the role of true Catholic Action should not be identified with a mere spiritual inspiration of temporal organizations but it must provide for its members an educative action in all the problems of life'. At first there was some fear that A.C.O. might develop into an overlordship which, in the name of the spiritual arm, would try to impose a party line on Catholics who were actively militant in the different workers' movements. It must be said at once that these fears have not been realized. In a report presented at the fourth biennial *Rencontre Nationale*, held in April 1957, the point was made that 'throughout the country many of our comrades have joined groups with the single idea of finding spiritual support. Gradually they have been won over to concern about the missionary aspect of their work.' Thus A.C.O. does far more than provide retreats and other spiritual exercises for those who

are engaged in political or union activity. It aims to show them how in building the city of man they must, at the same time, build the city of God. In this work it now counts almost 2000 groups, most of them in the great industrial centres. The means used in this missionary work are, apart from the regular meetings of fully committed *militants*, gatherings called *communautés de départ*, where Catholics and well-disposed non-Catholics discuss their common problems as workers in a friendly atmosphere, and *proclamations à la masse*, by way of pamphlets, posters and periodicals. Everything in the movement is geared to the evangelization of the world of work.

At this same *Rencontre Nationale* Cardinal Feltin gave an admirable summary of the historical process which had led up to this present position:

When one looks at the history of the past fifty years, this word 'evangelize' marks what great progress has been made. I remember well that in my youth when people talked about the apostolate or about rechristianizing France, they were thinking only of politics. Everything was related to that, to make sure of electing the right people, and the general idea was that if there were a lot of Catholics in the Chamber of Deputies, the country would be transformed. What an enormous error and illusion that was! Then came pre-occupation with social matters: the *Semaine Sociale* was started, Social Secretariats, Christian Trade Unions and all kinds of social organizations were founded, with the idea of making Christian thought penetrate into society. They were all excellent in their way, but they were insufficient. Political action is necessary, as are social and economic action, but we must go further—and it is here that A.C.O. and Catholic Action make their impression and new contribution—we must evangelize. And that is your mission.

The story of the growth of A.C.O. is impressive: 1951: 450 groups in 35 dioceses with 8000 members; 1953: 1000 groups in 51 dioceses with 12,000 members; 1955: 1400 groups in 74 dioceses with 15,000 members; 1957: 1800 groups covering almost every diocese in France with a total of 20,000 members. Apart from a shortage of priests with the competence and the will to be chaplains, it suffers from two major difficulties. It is a movement which includes both men and women, but woman's place in the organization has not been given enough thought nor are women themselves yet accustomed to the idea of an active apostolate—women's suffrage in France is little more than ten years old. The second difficulty arises from '*regroupement*' which is one of the basic

principles of A.C.O. and which aims to gather in the one group as diversified and representative a number of 'committed' members as possible, from C.F.T.C., C.G.T., M.R.P., M.L.P., etc. The purpose of this is manifold, to make them all feel their essential unity in faith, charity and apostolate, to increase their understanding of the different contributions that can be made to building the City while distinguishing all institutional reforms from the spiritual task, common to all, of building the kingdom of God, to avoid (where all the members are from the same organization) turning the group into a mere extension of a union or a political party. At the recent *Rencontre Nationale* many examples were quoted of difficulties encountered both in organizing this diversity and in making it work, but all were agreed that it must remain as a fundamental 'dogma' of the movement.

After their meeting in April of this year the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops announced the creation of a National Secretariat of the Workers' Mission to be directed by Canon Bonnet, national chaplain of A.C.O., and under the presidency of Cardinal Feltin. This is a further step forward in co-ordinating all the missionary efforts on the worker front and will include both laity and priests, the laity in the J.O.C., J.O.C.F. and A.C.O., and priests in some new form of priest-workers. This latter has yet to be defined, but it is clearly considered by the Hierarchy to be a part of the 'mission'. But the unfortunate experiences of 1944-54 will not be repeated—this time laity and clergy will be working together inside an overall plan and in close co-operation with the parochial clergy. In 1939 the lay apostolate was considered all sufficient—now in the workers' apostolate the Hierarchy considers that it must be a joint effort of laity and clergy.

This concentration on the apostolate to the working class does not mean that Catholic Action has not penetrated into other sectors of society, but it must be admitted that it has been least successful in the middle classes. The J.I.C. and the J.I.C.F. have continued in the post-war years their local groups—in the nature of things neither of them can be mass movements. In 1941 *Action Catholique Indépendante* (A.C.I.) was approved by the Bishops. It was begun by former members of the J.I.C.F., and although subsequently men's groups have been formed, it tends to have a larger feminine complement than masculine. As far as possible it attempts to carry out the same apostolate among the bourgeoisie as the A.C.O. among the workers, and perhaps one of its most

fruitful results has come from meetings organized between members of A.C.I. and A.C.O. which have engendered mutual understanding and help. Obviously there is not the same homogeneity, the same sense of class, among the bourgeoisie as there is among the workers. It is not a milieu in the same sense as the workers, but rather a level of society broken into a multiplicity of milieux. Professional men, for example, have very few of the preoccupations of business executives or of the managerial group. For these latter there exists the *Mouvement d'Ingénieurs et de Chefs d'Industrie d'Action Catholique* founded in 1937 and in part provoked by the industrial disturbances of the previous year. As its name indicates it is made up of two sections, one of employers and the other of lower echelons of management. The former has had little success, due it is suggested to the hardened individualism of the tycoons who should provide its membership. At the managerial level it counts about 2000 members who are making a valuable contribution to the apostolate both in their own enterprises and through the group studies that they make of managerial problems, especially the implementation of industrial democracy, in the light of Catholic social principles. But it must be admitted that there are great lacunae—there are no adult organizations of the lay apostolate to attract and hold the loyalty of the many thousands who pass through the J.I.C. and the J.E.C. in their youth.

The picture in rural areas is far more encouraging. The J.A.C. did not show the same drive and dynamism nor achieve such spectacular successes as the J.O.C. in the ten years of its existence before the war, but it built solidly and well. When it began there were very few rural organizations and it grasped the moment when the milieu was coming into existence, playing a large part in creating institutions and in directing them. Through circumstances it was forced to insist on the educative side of the moment, running correspondence courses, helping rural workers to take advantage of new techniques, and all of this tended to make it appear far more social than apostolic, although time has shown that it was also bringing a profound spirituality to its members. It has continued this work of cultural and technical education, not without criticism both from ecclesiastics and from other organizations who think their energies would be better devoted to running retreats and days of recollection for a spiritual élite. But the J.A.C., more lay in its direction than some of the other movements, has

persisted in its line of education and apostolate through the milieu—the contrast is clear between this and, for example, the A.C.O. whose conception of the apostolate is that the *militant* should bring his Christian idea to the milieu. This is not without significance in the current crisis which has split the specialized youth movements of Catholic Action asunder. The J.A.C. has gone from strength to strength and on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary it gathered together 350,000 in 86 regional meetings throughout the country.

The development of the adult apostolate in rural areas has followed the same pattern as in the other sectors of society in the post-war period. The *Ligue Agricole Chrétienne* (founded in 1939) became in 1941 the *Mouvement Familial Rural* (M.F.R.). It is now divided into different sections: young families, farm-workers, liberal professions and technicians, artisans and shopkeepers. Thus every aspect of life in the countryside is covered, and Christian leaders are provided for all the various organizations dealing with rural problems, co-operatives, education, insurance. It works through different committees which deal with civic matters, family matters, farming, insurance, leisure, culture, professional training, domestic training and cultivation of the land. Like the J.A.C. it publishes periodicals with a mass appeal, two with a joint circulation of more than a quarter of a million. Its literature and its organization have come under criticism on the score of being too much concerned with the temporal order (we have seen that the same objection has been made to the J.A.C.), but it is significant that the M.F.R. has never shown any signs of becoming a revolutionary movement wholly concerned with temporal matters as did the M.P.F. before it seceded from Catholic Action. The reason for this is the profound sociological difference between the proletarian sectors of the industrial towns and cities of France, the *pays de mission* of Godin's analysis, and most of the rural areas which come in Godin's second category, i.e. despite minimal religious practice there are strong vestiges of Christian culture and Christian civilization. Although a great deal still remains to be done, the J.A.C., J.A.C.F. and M.F.R. have changed the face of the countryside in the past quarter of a century—they have done all the things that Cardinal Feltrin spoke of, provided Catholic councillors and Catholic mayors, encouraged and set on a firm basis innumerable social initiatives, raised considerably the number of those practising, stimulated vocations to the priesthood

and the religious life, and besides all this (lest they should be accused of mere social catholicism) they have brought a true sense of the apostolate to the rural areas of France.

From time to time all three adult movements, A.C.O., A.C.I., M.F.R., issue joint manifestoes, and one of the most recent (October 1956) was a statement of common aims and methods. In the course of it the three movements defined their task in the following terms:

(a) In essence to 'announce' Jesus Christ and the Good News of salvation to the people of our milieu in their language and life and in our own way as laymen; (b) to christianize the spirit of the milieu which influences the conduct of its members; (c) to inspire with a Christian spirit its temporal institutions so that they may be ordered to God.

They then defined the basic methods common to their active members: that they should bear witness, that they should be committed to their social responsibilities, that they should be fitted spiritually and technically for their tasks. They concluded with the reflexion:

Our apostolic mission cannot be reduced to christianizing the temporal order; the essential task of our Movements is to declare Jesus Christ to our brethren, each of us according to our methods and in terms of our environment. . . . But, as we are laymen and so by definition committed to responsibilities in the temporal order, it is through our life and our responsibilities, and through the life of our milieu that we will accomplish our mission. We believe that our personal and collective life as men must be sanctified, and through it we must carry the message of salvation to all men.

The distinctive feature of the lay apostolate in France since the war has been the growth of these adult specialized movements, and each of them has had varying degrees of success. But one fact is clear: they still rely on the youth movements out of which they grew for the recruitment of their more apostolic members and particularly for their officers, at local, regional and national level. It is natural that a Jocist who has, as it were, served his apprenticeship in the J.O.C. should be a likely candidate for full-time work in the A.C.O., and this in fact is the case. It would be absurd to suggest that the adult movements are dependent on the specialized youth movements in any absolute sense, but relatively this dependence will continue for some time to come. And here is the poignancy of the present crisis of the youth movements—it is

more than the high spirits of youth, or growing pains, ultimately it may menace the whole structure of the lay apostolate. The fact must be faced that the A.C.J.F. in its component organizations is penetrated by a profound malaise of which no one can see the end.

To grasp the causes of it one must go back to 1949. In that year the federal council of the A.C.J.F. faced up to the fact that due to the evolution of social classes the rigid division of youth into five different groups no longer corresponded with reality. Beginning with the fact that there were many problems common to youth whether worker, student or farmer, they were led to a realization of the fluidity of the social structure and so to the confession that in concentrating each on their own milieu it was possible that, as the J.A.C. spokesman put it, they might 'forget the human community'. The idea was mooted that instead of five separate movements federated together there should be one movement with a number of branches. There was so much agreement on this that an executive commission was appointed to draw up a new constitution for the A.C.J.F. which would adapt its structure to the new situation, i.e. give a larger place to the consideration of the common good of the whole community, in order to counter-balance the danger of each specialized movement becoming exclusively preoccupied with its own social milieu.

After deliberations that lasted five years the suggested new constitution was presented to the federal council meeting of the A.C.J.F. in December 1954. The J.O.C. refused to accept it, and to avoid any open breach no vote was taken. At this same meeting there was a lively dispute between the J.E.C. and the J.O.C. as to which movement should be responsible for students in technical schools. Although it seemed a minor point of difference it was in fact symptomatic of a divergence of opinion which was so deep as to touch the fundamental assumptions of the specialized movements of Catholic Action. Two months later, in February 1955, the executive commission proposed (as a means of helping discussion of common problems) the publication of *Confrontations*, a review which would be an organ of the A.C.J.F. This was agreed to by a majority vote, the J.O.C. dissenting, and immediately afterwards in order not to be constrained by the majority the J.O.C. withdrew its representatives from the commission. The following month the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops published a 'note on doctrine' which seemed to delimit the amount of educational training of a civic and political nature that

might be given in the youth movements of specialized Catholic Action. In September 1955 the J.O.C. stated the conditions on which it would rejoin the A.C.J.F., the chief of these being that, the meetings should be no more than a 'round table' for the exchange of views and that any decisions arrived at should be unanimous, i.e. it claimed the right of veto. The A.C.J.F. refused these conditions. In the following month the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops, adverting to the growing crisis, stated: (i) the A.C.J.F. should not be a 'round table' but an organization with a true executive; but (ii) all decisions taken at Federal Councils should be unanimous; and (iii) in case of disagreement the Hierarchy would decide. The chief result of this was that for the first time in its history (apart from the war years) the annual December meeting of the Federal Council of the A.C.J.F. did not take place. The activity of the A.C.J.F. was paralysed throughout the year that followed, and in September 1956 the president, André Vial (who had been formerly the national secretary of the J.A.C.), resigned and this meant automatically the resignation of the national secretary as well. In the following month the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops called on the A.C.J.F. to consider itself henceforward as Catholic Action in the strict sense of the word, i.e. to make a clear break with activity in the temporal order. For some months the implications of this were discussed, and then came a further sign of disintegration. On 16 May 1957 the whole of the national secretariat of the student movement (to the number of fifty in the J.E.C. and thirty in the J.E.C.F.) resigned *en bloc*. In their public explanation of their action they went to the heart of the matter:

It has become ever more clear that the definition of specialized Catholic Action for youth, as the Hierarchy have now explained it, removes certain conditions which are necessary for our activity. . . . This definition makes a clear distinction between Catholic Action on the one hand, and civic and social action inspired by Christian principles on the other. But in studying its apostolic task the J.E.C. had been led to consider that student youth needed an all-round education which would include, among other domains, civic and social matters.

Hence they concluded that they were the wrong people to give this new and narrower orientation demanded by the Hierarchy, and so regretfully but with respect they tendered their resignation. It might be noted that a few days earlier the national

leaders of the Rover Scouts, though not strictly involved in the Hierarchy's decision, also resigned *en bloc*, and for similar reasons. They said that without precisely being part of general or specialized Catholic Action, yet they shared in the mission of Catholic Action given by the Church to the laity to the extent that their work of Christian education was missionary action in different youth environments. They had always done this by bringing their members to an understanding of their responsibilities in the social, political and missionary fields, and this through discussion of events and questions that concerned young people and which affected their future. In view of the Hierarchy's decision they felt that this was no longer possible.

From this it will be seen that this crisis is no storm in a teacup but a division throughout the whole of the A.C.J.F. On the one side is ranged the J.O.C. and the strict interpretation of Catholic Action and on the other is the experience of the leaders of the A.C.J.F., the J.A.C. and the J.E.C. (with, it is reasonable to presume, the support of their Jesuit chaplains¹) and their conviction that if a youth movement is to be educative it must be able to discuss current events and even to take a stand on them. Basically this difference seems to resolve itself into a matter of emphasis: whether the emphasis will be placed on evangelization (as in the J.O.C.) or on education (as in the J.E.C. and as called for by the leaders of the A.C.J.F.).

The classic definition of Catholic Action is that it is the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy, and the official act by which this collaboration is recognized is the *mandate* which a bishop gives to a movement of Catholic Action. The Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops in July 1946 affirmed that 'by this act (the mandate) the bishop associates the movement of Catholic Action in a most intimate fashion not with his hierarchical functions but with his pastoral care, with his 'apostolic activity' (Pius XII). Far from detracting from the dignity of the mission proper to the laity or modifying its nature, the mandate 'confers on this apostolate of the organized laity an official value and a public character in the Church, while at the same time leaving it to operate as a lay apostolate'. Discussion has centred round the limits which are imposed on the lay nature of this apostolate in view of the fact that it is an official body in the Church and so, to some extent, commits the Church. In practice the two

¹ The J.O.C. is alone in not having Jesuit chaplains.

extremes would seem to be that of the M.P.F. when it became wholly concerned with temporal matters and thus had to give back its mandate to the bishops, and the position of the A.C.O. which is not concerned in temporal matters at all except indirectly. Where the line is to be drawn will differ from country to country and from age to age. Thus the Provincial Council of Malines in 1937 had no hesitation in saying 'The youth of Catholic Action are to be taught how they can and should use their civil and political rights'. With its insistence on complete education, social, civic and political, this had been the position of the A.C.J.F. for many years before the specialized movements of Catholic Action appeared. In the past twenty-five years these movements have assumed that the French Hierarchy wished this to continue, but now it is clear that this is not so. In recent months there has been a great deal of discussion in France about the theory of Catholic Action and of the apostolate of the laity. But this is all beside the point and does not affect the main points of the controversy. It is quite clearly within the competence of the controversy. It is quite clearly within the competence of a bishop, or of the Hierarchy, to define the limits within which the laity may commit the Church in any given time and place. What is causing so much anguish and heart-searching in France at present is why the bishops (and among them Cardinal Gerlier, who as a young lawyer was a predecessor of André Vial and dexterously steered the A.C.J.F. through all the perils of the *Sillon* trouble) should have dealt such a mortal blow to the A.C.J.F. at this juncture.

It is clear that the position taken up by the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops in 1955-6 represents a hardening of attitude from that of 1946. The definition of 1946 did not change the nature of the A.C.J.F. although it was the necessary first step towards the second step, the re-definition, which forbids social and civic action. Realizing this the A.C.J.F. had done everything possible since 1946 to avoid the strict juridical link which would effectively stifle the genuine desire of the youth movements to measure up to their responsibilities in the temporal order, without becoming involved in party politics as such.

One must remember that over the past two years this drama has been played against the backdrop of the events in Algeria, of a general disillusionment with M.R.P. among the younger generation and indeed with all types of political Christian democracy, of

the aftermath of the suppression of the priest-workers, and looming over it all is the spectre of the following that the Communists can still command in the working class of France. It would seem that the bishops' main preoccupation is the eleven million workers of France who for the most part are still so far removed from the spirit of Christ and from belief in the Church. Their spirit is shot through with Marxism, while their belief is some form or other of worker messianism. Hence the deliberate accent of the J.O.C. on 'evangelization' as distinct from becoming too involved in larger problems where the Jocists might be tempted by the 'simple' solutions advanced by the Marxists. The educative work of the J.O.C. is certainly performed by the confrontation of problems, but they are a discrete series of small things. The lack of dining-room facilities in a factory is discussed in terms of the dignity of the worker, and the solution is to organize a delegation to the general manager—but the question of why an economic system exists where workers are treated thus is not raised. The thousands of young reservists sent to Algeria is a problem, and the solution is to write letters to them, send them parcels, a news-sheet—but the question is not raised for general discussion and for action as to what they are doing in Algeria in the first place.¹ And what is good for the J.O.C. is good for the rest of the youth—certain limitations imposed on the apostolate of the J.O.C. because it is a class movement are also imposed on others which cover several levels of society.

From the J.O.C. to the A.C.O. the worker apostolate is organized like a pyramid, but this is not true of the parallel movements. It is not at all certain that those who are leaving the J.A.C. will automatically pass over into the M.F.R., and there is no adult movement to receive the professional men leaving the J.E.C. The result is that, with the present structure of Catholic Action the working class, and the workers' apostolate, tends to become more and more isolated from the rest of society, and it will be a very long time before the parish can become the meeting place for workers and other classes. These are the kind of conclusions that are being drawn from the bishops' statement of October 1956. It is feared that all movements of Catholic Action will eventually be remodelled on the A.C.O., admirably suited perhaps for the task

¹ Nevertheless it must be admitted that the J.O.C., at the national level, has issued statements (in September 1955, April 1956 and May 1957) calling for negotiations to be opened between the two communities in Algeria.

that it has to fulfil, but a debatable prototype for the broad apostolic education of young students, young professional men, young farmers and even young workers.

Thus the advances that have been made in the lay apostolate of adults in the past ten years (and there has been no space to speak of the admirable experiments being made in the realm of family groups) would seem to be balanced, if not menaced and even nullified, by the disarray that has come upon the youth movements in the past eighteen months. It is impossible to be optimistic about the outcome, but one may perhaps take courage from the words of Cardinal Suhard, written ten years ago:

We must see in it [Catholic Action] a clear proof of the way in which the Church ceaselessly renews her youth. Catholic Action, which began from principles whose consequences were to reveal themselves as incalculable, in particular the sharing of the laity in the evangelization of the world and in restoring their God-given direction to human values, has today reached every class of society . . . [But] Catholic Action is not something that has reached its final form; it is still in process of developing. It is *in via*. Its methods are continually being overhauled, its results analysed, its future scrutinized. That there should be moments of pause and of unforeseen ebullition is normal and even reassuring; for these are recognizable signs of life.

YEARS OF CHANGE

The Position of the Church in France

By HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL FELTIN,
Archbishop of Paris

We have the permission of His Eminence to print, for the first time, the lecture which he delivered at the Institut Français, South Kensington, on 17 October 1955, as taken down in shorthand at the time by a member of his audience.

A NUMBER of books have been published in the last few years on the religious situation in France. Some of them—and I am thinking particularly of the work of the Abbé Godin—have spoken of a ‘dechristianization’. Others, however, have tried to prove that France remains fundamentally Christian. A recent poll conducted by a public opinion survey tends to confirm this favourable view.

What is the religious situation in France? What is the situation of the Catholic Church in France? It is extremely difficult to give a true picture of the underlying state of religion in France. Nothing is more dangerous than to make a judgement from outside; yet my survey must be from outside, as I cannot pretend to penetrate the souls of my fellow-countrymen. On the other hand, by their behaviour people to some extent reveal their dispositions.

The dechristianization of the industrial suburbs is a fact, but these are not the whole of France. France is far from being without resources from the religious point of view.

The position today is vastly different from that of fifty years ago. The Catholic Church in France was then going through a painful period, although it had the benefit of the efforts of a number of men of great worth. There was some violent persecution. Men and women of the religious Orders were driven from the country and forced to seek refuge abroad, some of them finding a welcome in England. Even the smallest churches were

forced to make inventories of their possessions. The Papal Nuncio was sent back. Separation of the Church and State was decreed. Under threat of prosecution, priests were forced to give official notification of the holding of a public meeting before celebrating Mass, and there were in fact several prosecutions under this order. Seminarians in Paris were sent into the army when the concession by which clerical students did one year's military service instead of three was abrogated. Seminarians could not go out into the streets of the capital without being insulted, and everything coming from the clergy was suspect.

Some members of the clergy and of the Catholic laity reacted vigorously against this state of affairs, but their response was hardly on a national scale, and, broadly speaking, this harmful atmosphere impregnated the whole of our French society.

What a change there is today! This began to be apparent with the 1914 war and continued afterwards. My theme today is the present situation of the Church.

What strikes one first of all is the fact that in all walks of life there are Catholics who bear a witness to their faith that is unostentatious but exerts a real influence. This applies to all social and political *milieux*. There are many Catholics in the Civil Service and in the professional classes. In some spheres there are many Catholics, in some not so many, but there are none from which they are absent.

We have a range of political parties which, with some justification, you find surprising compared with your own. In all except those of the extreme Left are to be found convinced and practising Catholics. This arises from the fact that in France both Church and State have their respective places, and they understand and respect each other. However distinct one is from the other, it is impossible in an organized society for the Church to ignore the State or for the State to fail to recognize the place of the Church. We believe that the more cordial the relationship and the more Church and State are separate but inseparable, the better it will be for the country as a whole. Recently the head of the French Government, not a Catholic, visited the Holy Father, and the Pope, who had hardly recovered from a serious illness, received him with full honours at the Vatican.¹ The French Government was officially represented by Ministers at the beatification of the

¹ His Eminence was speaking, of course, before there had been any announcement of the visit to the Holy Father paid in May this year by the President of the Republic.

Founder of the Marist Order, again at the beatification of the martyrs in China, and thirdly at that of the martyrs of Laval.

These events, which all took place in 1955, are an indication of the excellent relations between the Holy See and the French Republic. Our regime is one of separation between Church and State, but it is a cordial separation. At Masses at which Ministers are present in their official capacity, many no longer hide their faith but indeed rather make it apparent by following in their missals.

There has also been a renewal of activity in the fields of liturgy and public worship. A great change is apparent when we compare the situation with that in former days. In my childhood one found very few men who followed the Mass in their missals. They were content to go to a Low Mass late in the morning, at which they assisted standing and without any real show of interest. Today, if you move about the streets of Paris on a Sunday morning, you see many men going to church with their missals under their arms. And in church in the towns and in the country the faithful understand much better than they did what the Sacrifice of the Mass means. There has been a real education in the liturgy, particularly in the last twenty-five years. Many Catholics are taking a growing interest in the liturgy, but this brings with it certain dangers. Under the plea that things must be improved, that greater simplicity is needed, and that the faithful should be faced only with services they can readily understand, some strange proposals have been made which run the risk of introducing an anarchy harmful to the unity and authority of the Church. But the Church does not reject out of hand all ideas intended to combat an excessive conservatism. Many suggestions brought forward in Rome by the French Bishops have in fact been adopted.

When, as Archbishop of Paris, I celebrate pontifical Mass in Notre Dame, three or four priests are kept busy administering Holy Communion to the faithful during the Communion of the Mass. In the old days, it was an unheard-of thing that anybody should expect to communicate at a solemn Mass of this kind.

During the religious persecution which I have mentioned, there were two special forms of apostolic activity in France which continue to give good results today—the Catholic schools and the parish clubs. These parish clubs have been in the past, and, in fact, sometimes still are, nurseries in which dependable Catholics are

formed; but this particular form of apostolic activity is not enough. When Pope Pius XI introduced Catholic Action and insisted that the laity must take their share of apostolic effort, and when the Young Christian Worker movement was launched in Belgium, French Catholics responded to the appeal with enthusiasm. Other movements also grew up, such as the Young Christian Agricultural Movement, the Christian Student Movement, and Catholic Action among the younger professional workers.

The methods employed by these bodies gave and still give some fine results, but alone they are not enough. The specialized Catholic Action movements, each working in its own *milieu*, try to create a spiritual awareness. But the last war had in some cases an unfortunate influence, giving them a too exclusively temporal outlook. The good will of these young apostles was not sufficient to resist the atheistic pressure around them. The lump was too heavy and the leaven too light. But in the last six years there has been a change for the better in this respect.

Besides this specialized Catholic Action, there is a general movement centred on the parishes, and I should mention such organizations as the *Cœurs Vaillants* for children and the professional associations, all of which preach the same ideal. It can hardly be denied that all this represents a fine effort, and that through it the dechristianization will be gradually overcome.

There is an excellent missionary spirit among the clergy, and among very many of the laity. When we speak of missionaries we think of those who go out to such places as Africa, spurred on by an impatient faith. They count on the advancing Church, just as the Church counts on them. They are realists, but they are not satisfied with the results of their efforts. They do their best to share the lives of the peoples whom they are seeking to influence. Sometimes they make tactical errors before discovering the right direction in which to exert their influence. But after fifty or a hundred years, Chinese or African Bishops will be consecrated as a result of what they have done. In the same way, when we talk of the missionary spirit in France we think of somewhat similar conditions. To succeed, these missionaries become workers among the workers, sharing their suffering, and their lives in all that is not sin. They try to find a way of introducing the Gospel in a soil that is perhaps more sterile than that of China because it received the word before and allowed it to die.

The missionaries then are dissatisfied with their efforts and

ready for any sacrifice for the success of their mission, and they want to find the right spot to introduce a knowledge of the Gospel and of the Church. They have a great part to play, but their task carries with it great risks, and vigilance is necessary to see that they carry it out without causing dislocation and crisis. There have been a certain number of deficiencies, particularly in regard to recruitment and training. Many Catholics have failed to understand the true nature of the task these missionaries are performing, and again, even among the missionaries themselves, there have been failures to understand fully the priestly function.

All this provoked a crisis about which sufficient has been written in the world's Press to dispense me from dealing with it at greater length. This crisis was all the more serious in that it left a false impression, sustained by stubborn prejudices and malevolent propaganda, that the Church had decided to give up her efforts among the working class. In fact, though the Church has decided that the experiment cannot be continued on the lines on which it was started in France, she has not abandoned her missionary activities among the working class, for which there is indeed a real need. The crisis has shown how essential is a new solution to the problem which will safeguard the priestly life of the missionaries.

The Cardinal then mentioned a number of organizations in the social and charitable fields, such as those working among the homeless and the Chantiers du Cardinal, a body founded by Cardinal Verdier which in the space of twenty-five years had built 135 churches and chapels in the diocese of Paris alone, without appealing to any other diocese for help, and solely through the generosity of Paris Catholics. This generosity was shown in a thousand ways, such as for instance the denier du culte. His Eminence continued:

Our priests live poorly but they do not grumble, and in fact this helps their apostolate, especially in some dechristianized areas where one still hears talk about the non-existent riches of the Church.

One has to admit that the generosity of the faithful merits the warmest praise. The various lay Catholic organizations, such as, for instance, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, are so numerous that it was found necessary, some years ago, to bring them all together in a single federation that now numbers over a hundred different bodies. There are professional, social, and Christian trade

union organizations, and also various organizations providing information services. Then there are the *Semaines Sociales*, a kind of itinerant university, providing authoritative teaching on a chosen subject each session.

Christian writers, added Cardinal Feltin, played a considerable part in the literary activity of the country. He mentioned particularly writings on scriptural subjects. Catholics were, however, represented in all branches of literature: in historical writing by such authorities as Daniel-Rops, and in philosophical writing by Maritain, Gilson, and others. Existentialism was combated by such writers as Gabriel Marcel. When it came to Personalism, Catholics were represented by Mounier. Then there was Claudel, whose plays were popular successes. Novels, some good and some bad, dealing with religious subjects, were assured of a public. His Eminence also mentioned particularly Mauriac and Luc Estang. There had been more than ten novels in five years which, following the example set by Bernanos in the Journal d'un Curé de Campagne, had priests as the central characters. His Eminence went on:

But there are some defects and ambiguities. Contemporary French literature is not beyond reproach. French theatrical fare does not always give the foreigner a true picture of France. It sometimes adopts a licentious attitude, and the foreigner making a short visit to Paris will be tempted to form a judgement which, while it may be justified on the basis of the plays he has seen, does not correspond with the real picture.

Secularism, which has had an adverse effect on the religious situation for more than sixty years, is a black spot. Some Catholics claim that it amounts to nothing more than a strict insistence on the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal. If that were all there was to it we should have nothing further to say, but in fact secularism is more than this. It is a philosophy. It is the exaggerated worship of man and the denial of God and of His authority. Secularism rejects all that is above the human person and human destiny, and is exclusively concerned with the temporal. It tends to build up a moral and social system independent of all idea of God, of homage to God. This leads many French people to a scepticism, which, while it may incite them to respect the convictions of others, leaves them at the same time in an unfortunate state of religious indifferentism. The deep apathy on religious matters to be found in certain circles paves the way for

an anti-clerical campaign which sometimes reaches a pitch of violence.

It is this that lies at the root of the struggle over the schools. I realize that France is not the only country in which this is a serious problem for Catholics, and I understand that it became the subject of controversy at a recent election in England. But Catholics are more favourably placed in this respect in England than they are in France. I gather from His Lordship Bishop Beck that here the running expenses and the salaries of the teachers are paid by the State, though the Catholic community has to provide the school buildings. In France for more than a hundred years the freedom of schooling has been theoretically recognized, but on the other hand the secular campaign has at times been very fierce. The growth of a generation greatly influenced by materialism, the progress of science, and the development of technical education do not make an atmosphere in which it is easy for students to look towards God and to take account of their eternal destiny.

There is a danger, moreover, that the materialism and the virulent anti-Catholicism that we are witnessing in the East may cause a further deterioration in the attitude of people who have already been seriously affected. Take, for example, the situation over the divorce laws. These were first introduced seventy years ago, and the number of people taking advantage of them has grown enormously. The war has strengthened this tendency towards a break-up of family life. This weakening of family life has in turn had an influence on the recruiting for the seminaries, where there is a serious lack of candidates for the priesthood. The young people, too preoccupied with temporal and technical problems, have not answered the appeal with sufficient generosity.

In spite of the efforts of Catholics with a social conscience, anti-religious Socialists have been provided with arguments by the failure of certain Catholics who show no interest in the difficulties of the workers and pay no heed to the appeal in the social encyclicals. These opponents do not know, or pretend not to know, of the Church's initiative in social matters, and pretend that Catholicism is solely the religion of the *bourgeoisie*. These able tactics have succeeded in misleading even some Catholics. Atheist materialism is thus certainly to be feared from the religious point of view. Little by little the Catholic exposed to it forgets to protest. Then he finds himself working with the Communists, and he forgets to work out his programme of action in Catholic terms.

This leads him to an unintended abdication. The City cannot be created in the absence of God.

Well, here are some of the more unfortunate aspects of the religious situation that I have put before you frankly. On the other hand the Church in France has resources which give me the right to end on a hopeful note. What we have sown is merely a grain of mustard, but it can become a great tree.

Incantation des Noces

By JEAN-CLAUDE RENARD

Père, c'est dans le Christ et ce n'est que par Lui
qu'arraché à la mort de mon corps divisé
je puis vouloir en moi celui que vous voulez
et passer par amour de la semence au fruit,

entrer dans la Parole en moi-même qui entre
et par qui dans mes os voici que naît un homme
qui reçoit le pouvoir de lier ce qu'il nomme
en nommant tout du nom dont vous êtes le centre,

de faire noce en moi de ma moelle et du monde
pour être avec Celui qui unit dans mon sang
la force d'être unique et d'être unifiant
le noeud même où se noue la mesure du monde,

et d'autant plus en Christ profond jusqu'à moi-même
et profond jusqu'aux corps des grandes profondeurs
que plus profond en Lui et plus intérieur
et plus originel à l'Origine même,

et tout l'Homme par Lui soudain comme quelqu'un
qui voit et qui connaît et qui possède tout
en ne goûtant plus rien qu'avec le propre goût
que vous avez de vous sous le sel et le pain.

Père, c'est dans le Christ et seulement en lui
que chaque corps nourri du Corps qui les engage
forment chacun des mots de l'unique langage
dont une unique bouche a pour eux retenti,

car voici que soudain, dans le Christ où il germe,
cet homme encor pourtant pesant d'une autre chair
devient déjà pareil—quand l'Esprit l'a couvert—
au lien éternel qui lie Dieu à Soi-même,

et dans un effrayant et splendide mystère
reçoit comme à son tour, là même où il grave,
de donner vie et gloire au Père qui l'habite
en vivant de Celui qui est la vie du Père,

et comme de combler, en lui offrant un homme
qui n'est plus dans le Christ que le Christ accompli,
le désir douloureux, terrible et infini
que Dieu même a de Dieu dans la moelle de l'homme.

Père, c'est dans le Christ et par son seul amour
qu'en unissant au sien celui qu'il met en moi
l'homme ancien que je suis se videra de soi
pour n'être plus qu'un homme en qui Dieu seul est lourd,

un homme en qui le Christ mûrit déjà l'été
qui me forme déjà de la force de l'Homme
dans la force de Dieu—et déjà me transforme
en un homme vivant qui vit où vous vivez,

un homme dont le sens s'accroît de chaque sens
et dont le corps saisi dans le Corps de la Vigne
puise à l'unique source où puisent les racines
l'eau qui lie chaque grain tout en les prodiguant,

un homme rassemblé qui croît avec chaque homme
vers l'Homme véritable—et du monde d'ici
construit avec le Christ dont lui-même est bâti
le monde essentiel qui déjà se consomme,

un homme où s'accomplit le mystère du blé
ensemble ensemencé et moissonné ensemble
pour que dans l'unité du Corps qui les rassemble
chaque homme puisse ensemble être plénifié.

The *Grand Prix catholique de Littérature* for 1957 has been awarded to Jean-Claude Renard, one of whose poems is here printed for the first time. The award was made in recognition of his work as a whole, and in particular of his latest book of poems, *Père, voici que l'Homme* (1955), by a jury which included among others François Mauriac, Gabriel Marcel, Daniel Rops, Luc Estang, Jacques Madaule and J. J. Bernard.

Born at Toulon in 1922, M. Renard has published five other collections of his poems in addition to that mentioned above: *Juan* (1945), *Cantiques pour des pays perdus* (1947), *Haute-Mer* (1950), *Métamorphose du Monde* (1951) and *Fable* (1953).

FRENCH WRITING SINCE THE WAR

A Tour of The Jungle

By ALAN PRYCE-JONES

THE first impression evoked by the spectacle of French literary activity in recent years is one of chaos; the next, of surprise that, in the circumstances, the chaos is not even greater. A chorus of names fills the air, backed by a flurry of opinions. Prizes abound, rows divide the writers of Paris into shifting camps of Guelph and Ghibelline, old gentlemen strike tremendous attitudes, young gentlemen talk tremendous nonsense, and everyone pours books from the Press in an unceasing tide. Where, in all this, can a pattern be found?

At the end of the war there were at least a handful of leaders. There was Gide, for one, and Claudel. There were formidable dinosaurs like Julien Benda, or Maurras, at opposite extremes of thought; there were Montherlant and Malraux and Mauriac; there was Cocteau, captivating and anxious as one of Picasso's harlequins. The ruins of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* existed from 1939, beside the ruins of surrealism. Reputations, like that of Sartre, made shortly before the war, were obviously about to expand. But in all this it was extremely hard to discern any recognizable pattern, for the war had brought with it a sediment of suspicion and rancour which declined to settle. It has not entirely settled yet.

In retrospect, it may seem less the war than the years of the Front Populaire which upset the orderly dispositions of French culture. For the basic cause of chaos has undoubtedly been the unwilling search for a discipline forced upon the French people by the *trahison des clercs* which took place with increasing rapidity from 1930 onwards. The routine battles of clerical and anti-clerical, socialist and conservative, Paris and the provinces, were

abruptly eclipsed by a wave of feeling which brought Péguy and Léon Bloy into fashion at one end of the scale and Céline or Aragon at the other. It became necessary to think things out instead of merely complaining about them, and in the middle of this process the German army arrived like an unpredictable wolfhound, driving the flock of writers in all directions, disposing of some at a single snap, and ruining the nerves of all who survived, even in the safety of North Africa or the United States. Small wonder, then, that nearly a generation later the damage is still painfully obtrusive, and the norms of literary conduct still undecided. For in France literature sticks close to history, and it will not be until France has found some coherent system of national life again that her literature will again fulfil itself satisfactorily.

This does not mean that we can afford to sit back and wait. On the contrary, the interpenetration of public and private life among French writers makes them doubly important as evidences of what is going on in their country. There is the case of Gide, for instance. Up to the moment of his death, Gide not only played a personal part of exceptional consequence in contemporary writing, but, at first with Valéry and Alain still alive, he maintained a whole tradition of French humanism. He had disciples. He provoked polemics. When his correspondence with Claudel was published it was often thought that Claudel had been the loser in reputation. Yet the moment he died, Gide became a memory rather than a force, overnight. Little books by Jean Schlumberger and Roger Martin du Gard gave that memory the tang of red pepper rather than rosemary, but already interest in the subject has sunk to the level of gossip, and rather languid gossip at that. Whereas Valéry and Alain do not even get gossiped about. For the kind of humanism represented by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* has proved inadequate to the needs of the 1950s, and we are witnessing the ironic spectacle of Gide coming to mean no more to the young than the Goncourts or Paul Bourget meant to him.

What the French seek is a clear voice. They seek it even if they do not care for its accent. That is why, in the end, it is Claudel who has won the suffrages of the public, even when his message gets on their nerves. At least, it is obscurely felt, Claudel knew where he was. From the moment when he stood, a young man, in the nave of Notre Dame and found his faith, he displayed a consistent hierarchy of sentiments. What matter, then, if those sentiments were often expressed in a rebarbative tone of voice? There

are precedents for that. Few more disagreeable writers exist than Léon Bloy, for example. Yet for the same reason Bloy has worked his way into public esteem. He knew where he was at a time when such knowledge was unpopular. His example is all the more valuable nowadays when to know where one stands becomes rarer every day. Compared to such grasp of fundamentals, manner seems, to the majority, of small importance. The rough voice is even rather reassuring.

That is why certain writers of the extreme left have had their success. They, too, know where they are. They, too, are prepared to blurt out the truth as it strikes them rather than temper it to the convenience of others. And here, perhaps, it may be appropriate to quote a text taken from a very recent number of a popular weekly, *L'Express*:

Deux faits doivent être constatés : l'ancienne laïcité s'est effondrée. Il n'y a plus, aujourd'hui, entre les groupes antagonistes, de commune mesure et l'abandon, par l'équipe gouvernementale actuelle, de toute préoccupation intellectuelle et de toute règle morale, n'est que le témoignage de la liquidation d'un ancien type de civilisation. Le moment est venu où chacun doit prendre individuellement ses responsabilités, approfondir sa pensée en remontant aux sources philosophiques ou religieuses de sa pensée politique. Mais, cela fait, il n'y a de possibilité de créer une civilisation nouvelle du travail que si toutes les tendances philosophiques et religieuses se réunissent pour créer une laïcité nouvelle, reconstruire une commune mesure de la société, un ensemble de valeurs éthiques sur lesquelles tous puissent se mettre d'accord, en vue d'une action commune.

There, in a few words, is the whole history of French writing since the war. It has simply amounted to the reflexion of a desperate, and generally unsuccessful, effort to overcome ideological differences which are admitted to be out of date, yet which have become so deeply ingrained in national life that even the shock of a second world war and the threat of a third have failed to extirpate them.

The first disquieting sign has been a withdrawal on the part of the poets. Poets are inevitably hypersensitive to an intellectual climate, and the poets of France have perceived, we must suppose, that the times are not propitious to them. Perhaps the most striking of the poets who still write is René Char; and it is significant that he is the kind of poet he is and no other: a poet lighting matches in the dark, a withdrawn, fugacious, alembicated sage. Its withdrawal is the most consequent aspect of his art: the kind

of things he has to say go with small editions, a strictly private life, a snail-like sensitivity to the least jar balanced by a healthy toughness of fibre. Much the same might be said of Patrice de la Tour du Pin, another admirable poet who prefers to keep out of the hurly-burly, and of St John Perse, who shelters his creative life behind a pseudonym. Even the most *engagés* of poets, such as Eluard or Aragon, have betrayed uneasiness about their *engagement*: like perhaps the best of contemporary left-wing poets, Pablo Neruda in Chile, they have written far better on neutral themes than when their social sympathies were involved. Behind such writers there are charming poets like Supervielle, whose reputation was made thirty years ago; there are commercially successful versifiers like Prévert, excellent writers such as Reverdy or Guillevic whose work is somehow tinged with disappointment; and behind these again there is the almost total absence of an *avant-garde*. Reviews resembling *transition* still exist, but with a hopeless air of decorum about them. No, the poets are on the whole in the doldrums; and those of them who combine a gift for writing verse with a practical prose-writer's bent, like Pierre Emmanuel, show their apprehension by writing as little as possible.

The novelists are not so much better off. Montherlant and Malraux, two of the best, have turned to other channels of expression. Mauriac, it is true, gives no hint of flagging vitality, nor does Julien Green. But there is something slightly ague-stricken about their work since the war, even though it is arguable that Green's *Moïra* can stand beside Camus's *La Peste* as the most memorable experience in fiction of the last decade. Once again, it may well be 'la liquidation d'un ancien type de civilisation' which has stamped, with so febrile a mark, the moral problems in which they deal. In the case of Mauriac, too, a vast journalistic enterprise has troubled the springs of his art. For Mauriac has taken it upon himself to act as *directeur de conscience* to one type of Frenchman just as Sartre appeals to another. It should be added, too, that the darkness of atmosphere which clings to so much serious Catholic fiction in England is not much lighter in France. Sulphur and vaticination are the two properties in which the Catholic writers of France prefer to deal when they are in the mood to show off their paces.

The trouble here is still that no solid base for a coherent national life can yet be discerned beneath the bitterness left by occupation and resistance, beneath the conventional manoeuvring

of parties extinct in all but a capacity for mutual dislike. The writers of France, and in particular the novelists (who have to find their material in French national life), are like draughtsmen, pushing back and forth along established lines, huffing each other at appointed moments, and never perfectly sure whose hand is guiding them towards victory or defeat.

The occasional odd fish therefore becomes all the more appealing: for instance, Marcel Jouhandeau, the laureate of infelicity. Jouhandeau appeals to the kind of reader who revels in the novels of Ivy Compton-Burnett. He is concise, high-coloured,adder-like in the sharp thrusts he delivers at anyone within range. His innumerable little books are so many poison phials. Pressed down to a domestic scale, he crystallizes the insecurity which haunts modern France. The overlap between hate and love, between incredulity and belief, between *le rire* and *le ricanement*, has never been better expressed. And the further one looks into French fiction the more one sees this same exasperated spirit as the prime mover of the imagination, although it seldom operates so cleanly as in Jouhandeau himself. But there is Jean Dutourd and Marcel Aymé, Roger Nimier (so full of unfulfilled promise) and Roger Peyrefitte. There are Gascar and Queneau and Véraldi. There are a host of others as well. And of them all it might be said that there is almost no sacrifice they would not make for the wry comment, the paradoxical astringency. These, apparently, are the writers in touch with the *Zeitgeist*—not the tellers of enormous tales like Henri Troyat or Jules Romains. The last ten years in French literature have been a decade of asides, of digressions, of muffled exclamation. It is those who have tried to look at life steadily who have failed to keep it in focus at all.

If to keep away from the mainstreams of life be a virtue there is one talent which must not be overlooked—a talent which could never have flowered in any age but this. No doubt a great deal of ballyhoo has gone to the making of Jean Genet's reputation. It has been blown to a dangerous inflation by Sartre in a book of exceptional opacity. All the same, there it is: a reputation as uncomfortable as an ulcer, as asphyxiating as carbon monoxide. Were it not for that 'liquidation d'un ancien type de civilisation' could Genet ever have got into print at all? It is true that he has one literary virtue, added to a rare faculty of dithyrambic expression: his obscenity (which is all he has to offer) is perfectly natural. He writes as he feels; not, as a pornographer writes, in

cold blood. But how extravagant must be the imaginative life of a society in which it is possible for such fancies to become common coin—not sold under the counter but exposed to grave consideration by one of the chief philosophic minds of the time.

An odd fish who deserves to be mentioned with respect is Maurice Blanchot. Blanchot plays no part in literary life; he lives remotely; his books are the outcome of purely private preoccupations. Yet both as novelist—of a Kafka-esque kind—and as critic he has made a considerable mark. He may be taken as an extreme example of a particular kind of modern French writer—one of those who find the life of cities suffocating, and prefer to go their own way without any adventitious social aids to success. Giono is another, though of a far more accessible order. It must be said of writers like these that they are not regionalists; but that they have drawn the logical conclusion from the fact that France is a country of great emptiness or great density of population—unlike England, which is becoming more and more a uniform suburb. The urbanists have to get tougher and tougher in order to keep going; it is writers like Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir nowadays who represent the intellectual life of Paris, not genial figures such as Léon-Paul Fargue, whose death removed one of the last of the old-fashioned Bohemians. Unless they are very fashionable or very ambitious or very poor, writers escape to the open country far more than they used to, for fear of being reduced to silence by the noise around them.

There have not, after all, been any recent prolongations to the work of Montherlant or Malraux or Roger Martin du Gard or Pierre-Jean Jouve. Any of these might have written a master-novel since the war: all have used their talents, if at all, in smaller ways. No doubt this is because, in France as in England, the scenes of daily life have become blurred in outline. There is room for irony, for satire, for competent commercial writing of a romantic kind as in the novels of Françoise Sagan; but there is no *commune mesure de la société*, no settled vision of life which can either be promoted or fought against according to the temperament of the individual. Novelists therefore mark out their own small fields of individual activity. They have no possibility of making a synthesis like Balzac or Stendhal, no time for an act of lifelong dedication like that of Flaubert. So the result is a constant murmur of activity, mostly honourable, mostly dullish, out of which it is rare to catch a single outstanding voice.

When such a voice is heard, an enormous clamour is raised in response. The case of Paul Léautaud is to the point. Léautaud was brought back to circulation at a great age by means of cleverly organized radio interviews. After a silence of many years, he suddenly became a famous man; his diary was dug up—it is still in the press—his idiosyncrasies were referred to with awe. Observed dispassionately, the poor old gentleman was made to appear like some circus freak; yet he tottered about in the limelight for a year or two before death saved him from his admirers—most of whom were evidently dazzled by the fact that he could articulate at all, and so wrapped up the plain fact that he had been an amusing card forty and fifty years previously, in a mortifying disguise of adulation.

He had the advantage of being a diarist; for in France, too, there is no surer way of reaching to the heart of the public than by publishing a diary. The word '*cahier*' is engraved on every writer's memory; it gives him the chance of offering himself to the public in homeopathic doses and building a reputation for sagacity into the bargain. All too often what follows is similar to the diary of Julien Green. The first volume, written as a private journal, displays merits which steadily decline as the public demands access to privacy as a right. But, apart from the diary, what is left for the imaginative writer? Poetry is beyond him, the novel has sunk into a quicksand of social uncertainty. All that is left is himself.

In times such as these, the philosopher and the historian, the critic and the biographer come into their own. They can avert their eyes from the present, and in special cases they can admit to their ranks an imaginative writer like Marguerite Yourcenar. Difficult writers like Simone Weil or Père Teilhard de Chardin have come into their own since the war to an extent which might have seemed unlikely twenty years earlier. They offer an escape from the temporal, they point towards possible windows in walls otherwise blank. A similar desire for something solid to cling to must account for the success of the review *Esprit*, first under the late Emmanuel Mounier, and later under Albert Béguin, who died this spring. It must not be supposed that great fortunes have been made by the exponents of disinterested thought; yet nothing is more encouraging in the recent literature of France than the welcome accorded to serious attempts to grapple with first principles as distinct from surface phenomena. It is as though a perceptible number of French readers understood that, in the

light of the last half-century, most of our basic responses to life have to be thought out afresh, and that it is appropriate for France, at the centre of European civilization, to take a lead in this process.

A number of elder writers have made new reputations as biographers: André Maurois, for instance, with excellent books on Proust and Hugo, and André Billy, with his *Sainte-Beuve*. It looks as though, in France as in England, a good deal of modern reading were done for information rather than for imaginative excitement. The public, in its literary habits, likes to think it has stolen a march on the world—a fact which may account for a tendency to read old books rather than new ones, or to seek, in the admirable volumes of popular history which have always been a pride of French publishing, in charming historical excursions such as the essays of Emile Henriot, or in humanistic studies like the books of Grousset and Carcopino, a balanced civilization sadly to seek in the immediate present.

What is lacking in all this is anything strictly new. There is still more novelty in the books of Péguy or Bernanos than in most of their successors; there is still a terrifying youthfulness—a flicker, as it were, of Aladdin's lamp—in Jean Cocteau which cannot be matched by any member of the rising generation. Against this can only be set a willingness to be moved, a response to good intentions, which keep France still firmly at the centre of European literature. At a time when nobody is producing very much of importance in any country, the sheer animal vitality of the French literary jungle keeps alive a half-unwilling respect. At any moment there may be a *gifle*, a duel, a suicide, a riot. By comparison, literary behaviour anywhere else becomes tepid or wooden. A cynic might complain that nothing is lacking but the books: but it would be proper for an optimist to retort that so long as the jungle is so packed with life it is only a matter of time before the beasts once again elect their king and settle down to serious business once more.

EXISTENTIALISM AFTER TWELVE YEARS

An Evaluation

By JOHN CRUICKSHANK

I

A TRANSLATION of Sartre's main philosophical work, *L'Être et le Néant*, has at last reached us from America. This fact, together with a post-Liberation perspective of twelve years, makes the present moment an appropriate one at which to reconsider French existentialism. There is also some interest in looking again at the movement from an English standpoint in view of its curiously ambiguous reception in this country. Existentialism has aroused a good deal of interest among us, yet it has so far failed to have much influence. It is often spoken of as a philosophical and literary fashion, but its more serious implications—particularly those of atheists like Sartre—have been rather lightly dismissed by philosophers and imaginative writers. Many indeed, with resolute English practicality, have regarded existentialism as a misshapen child, begotten of continental abstraction on continental mental and moral unhealth. Most of our novelists and playwrights prefer more soothing subject-matter for their works, and our professional philosophers have claimed that the worthwhile features of existentialism can be found in the English empirical tradition from Hume onwards.

The situation in France is very different. Leading French philosophers have found it necessary to define their position carefully in relation to Sartre. The pundits of the Sorbonne have honoured the movement with their own particular brand of solemn and weighty consideration. In literary circles existentialism has proved to be the most productive and persistent single

influence since the war. In other spheres of speculation and comment Sartre's ideas and example have also played their part. They have helped to form the new approach to literature of young critics like Barthes and Richard; they have imparted individuality and some notoriety to the political journalism of Sartre's own monthly, *Les Temps Modernes*; they have encouraged the blend of psychology and metaphysics to be found, for example, in Nimier's *Amour et Néant*; they have influenced the sociological and religious analyses of writers like Roger Mehl. This far-reaching influence of existentialism in general, and of Sartre in particular, is a phenomenon which should not be lightly dismissed. Indeed, existentialism is first and foremost a 'philosophy of crisis', a way of thinking that addresses itself to the problems experienced by living in the world today. In both its atheistic and Christian forms it is concerned to offer guidance in an age of confusion. It commends itself as a serious alternative to many who cannot easily accept some traditional sources of authority and certain traditional values. It is thus an interpretation of experience which should at any rate be understood before it is rejected—or indeed accepted.

There is a sense in which existentialism can be regarded as a form of philosophical thinking going back at least as far as St Augustine. Mounier's celebrated 'existentialist tree' has St Augustine as one of its 'roots', and the 'trunk' includes Pascal, Maine de Biran and Kierkegaard. As regards French existentialism in particular, its most recent history extends from the inter-war period to the present time and shows three distinct phases: (i) the pre-1939 foundations; (ii) the immediate post-war triumph; (iii) later consolidation and reflexion.

In the late 'twenties and the 'thirties French philosophy re-discovered Hegel, especially the *Phenomenology of Mind*. Academic commentaries like those of Jean Wahl and Jean Hyppolite helped both to emphasize the importance of Hegel's phenomenology and to encourage opposition to his idealism. Husserl and Heidegger were being closely studied at the same time, and a subjective, concrete, anti-Hegelian approach gained increasing philosophical acceptance. Gabriel Marcel reflected something of the new attitude in his *Journal métaphysique* (1930), *Etre et avoir* (1935) and several of his plays. In the late 'thirties Sartre wrote *La Nausée* (1938), *L'Imaginaire* (1940) and a number of other shorter works.

When the second world war ended existentialism began to enjoy a quite remarkable vogue in France. The atheistic branch of the movement came to the forefront and for some years the term 'existentialism' and the name Sartre were virtually synonymous in the public mind. Not merely did Sartre dominate the philosophical scene; he presented philosophy itself as an integral part of all existence and a way of living. He rejected the Hegelian distinction between life and the Thinking of Life. Sartre also showed real literary power as he proceeded to embody much of his thought in plays, novels and short stories that made a deep impression on the public. And one of Sartre's closest disciples, Francis Jeanson, helped to reveal him not as a corrupter of youth but as a serious moralist in the highest French tradition. This is also the period, of course, during which existentialism was often confused with a certain bohemianism being practised in the *cafés* and *caves* of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. At first Sartre himself did little to discourage youthful misunderstandings and misapplications of his ideas. However, having made Saint-Germain-des-Prés an international focal point of colourful appearance and small value, he eventually withdrew from the Café de Flore and the Deux Magots to more secluded haunts.

The most recent phase of existentialism has been one both of extended application and more carefully conducted reflexion. The most serious recent critics of existentialism within France itself have been concerned with what they consider to be its neglect of the sciences and of history. Sartre has derived much of his thought from German phenomenology, but some of his critics now claim that he leaves science out of the reckoning in a way that weakens the contemporary application of his ideas and compares unfavourable with, for instance, the approach of Husserl. The subjective emphasis of Sartre's outlook has led to his being accused also of neglecting history. His interpretation of such concepts as freedom and alienation has been criticized as paying insufficient attention to continuing historical forces. It was around these and related questions that lively debate arose in France following Aron's *L'Opium des intellectuels* (1953) and Merleau-Ponty's *Les Aventures de la dialectique* (1955). These critics, and many others, are also deeply disturbed by what has often been the apparently fellow-travelling attitude of Sartre towards marxism. This is a question on which Sartre is said to be writing a statement of very great length. It would be impossible to forecast its contents, but

Sartre's recent and detailed denunciation of the Russian intervention in Hungary represents a public anti-Soviet line that he has not often willingly adopted in the past.

II

Having briefly outlined the recent history of existentialism in France I must now try to summarize its subject-matter. Since Sartre has been such a dominant figure it is with his ideas that I shall mainly deal. I shall go on to comment on the extension of these ideas to the literary field, and conclude with some observations on the relationship between the atheistic and Christian branches of the movement.

Existentialism, as its name suggests, emphasizes the priority of existence. In effect it reverses the cartesian proposition to *sum, ergo cogito*. Sartre's well-known phrase is that 'existence precedes essence'. The fact of existence is my primordial feature as a human being; I cannot think or speak of myself without first positing my existence. It is only subsequently, by thought, experience, social contact, economic influence, etc., that my essence—what makes me a particular individual—is formed. Furthermore, to know the essence of a thing is in itself no guarantee of its existence. For example, I can describe the essence of a unicorn in detail, but a unicorn remains an object of thought only. And so, by this emphasis on the priority of existence, existentialism is concerned to focus attention on the actual world in which we are involved and to put on one side what is only possible as an object of thought. It begins with the concrete existence of people and things, it claims to be founded on immediate reality and is the enemy of abstraction. From this point of view, of course, the movement is symptomatic of a widespread contemporary trend. It reflects a general distrust of abstract values, of ready-made ideas and systems, of ultimates and absolutes. The general, intellectual climate in which existentialism has been able to flourish can be found equally clearly in the attitudes of non-Christian writers like Gide, Malraux and Lawrence, and those of Christian writers like Péguy, Bernanos and Graham Greene. The existentialists have simply made their own rigorous and demanding contribution to a wider tendency to regard human existence less as an established order and more as an order to be established.

This concrete, anti-idealist starting-point of existentialism also gives it a certain character of subjectivity. In his *Unscientific Postscript* Kierkegaard has a passage¹ in which he argues that man can never be a spectator, and a spectator only, of the drama of existence. God may be thought of in this way, but man is obliged to play a continuing role. He is directly and always involved in the action and can never enjoy the relaxation of the stalls. This theatrical image seeks to convey the same idea of subjectivity as Sartre's picture of the individual as 'in situation' and characterized by 'being-in-the-world'. Individual awareness of existence cannot be divorced from the individual act of existing.

Within this double framework of concreteness and subjectivity atheistic existentialism emphasizes three main themes. The first of these may be called the insufficiency of reason. Unlike some historical forms of atheism the sartrian type is not smugly rationalist. It is much more attuned to the present-day hesitations and self-questionings of scientists and theologians than were the atheisms of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century. In general it is on its guard against the way in which reason abstracts and systematizes thought and, eventually, human beings. Contemporary existentialists share that dissatisfaction with reason as an instrument of speculation to be found in Pascal, Kierkegaard and others. They also express, in stark and insistent terms, these writers' sense of the irrationality of existence itself. In fact, the gratuity and contingency of existence is a second major theme. Sartre holds that such objects as a chair, a shoe, a tree, as experienced by an individual, have no inherent necessity. They are simply there, given. It is readily conceivable that they might not be given or that, like all empirical data, they might be other than they are. Contingency is their fundamental category. Existence for Sartre conserves its original etymological sense (*ex-sistere*) of a surging forth impervious to logic and irreducible to any system. He speaks of existence as being 'opaque'. Such an adjective, incidentally, affirms the anti-Hegelian nature of existentialism once more. In direct contrast to Hegel's contention that 'everything which is, is rational', Sartre would presumably reply that everything which is must be irrational. The contingency of existence is what he calls the absurd. This view of objects as they are experienced by human beings is also taken of human beings themselves.

¹ See Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. London, Oxford University Press, 1945, p. 141.

According to Sartre they are unjustified and unjustifiable; according to Heidegger they are 'thrown into existence'. In general terms, then, the atheistic existentialists deny the presence of pattern and plan, as a human mind can conceive them, in the universe. They hold that thought and existence do not coincide or interlock at any fundamental level. This attitude to existence, particularly the emphasis on its absurdity, is reinforced by the third major theme—that of death. Death emphasizes the tragic ambivalence of the human condition; all the existentialists have produced their variations on the theme of *nascentes morimur*. Heidegger, for instance, defines human existence as 'being-for-death'. Once we are born we begin to die. Life is also the progressive realization of death. Death is the end which reinforces the absurdity of our condition.

Existentialism thus presents man as enmeshed in an alien existence, a prey to anguish and condemned to death. Attempts by man to hide his human condition from himself—what Pascal called *divertissement*—are stigmatized by Sartre as 'bad faith'. For Sartre, however, bad faith means more than this. He makes an important distinction between what is 'in-itself' ('*en-soi*') and what is 'for-itself' ('*pour-soi*'). The 'in-itself' is simply what is given, contingent, invariable—a material thing like a chair or Mount Everest, or something immaterial such as my last summer holiday or the life of Julius Caesar. The 'for-itself', on the other hand, is what possesses consciousness and the capacity to question its own existence and perform acts of choice. The 'for-itself' is freedom and responsibility. The nature of human beings is 'for-itself' in this sense, and man displays his essence by the activity of freedom. Sartre insists on the point by saying that man is 'condemned to be free' and must continually 'choose himself'. Man thus becomes the creator of values in the world and cannot escape the burden of responsibility. Sartre quotes Dostoevsky's phrase that 'each man is responsible to everyone for everything'. Clearly a most exacting ethic results from this idea and any attempt to escape its consequences is the other feature of what Sartre calls 'bad faith'. Authentic existence for the individual is thus a never-ending series of choices, a continuing exercise of freedom, a responsible rejection of the solid and sterile permanence of the 'in-itself'. I must choose and construct my own individuality; to do this is to assume responsibility not only towards myself but towards all men for 'in fashioning myself I fashion man'. Sartre adds the explanation that

'of all the actions a man may take in order to create himself as he wills to be, there is not one which is not creative, at the same time, of an image of man such as he believes he ought to be'.¹

It is on such a foundation of human integrity and obligation, constructed within a wider framework of cosmic contingency and alienation, that Sartre's bracing and demanding ethic is built. It is 'on the other side of despair', as he puts it, that he opens up these stringent and dramatic moral perspectives. He makes a real attempt at reconstruction in a world where intellectual confusion and moral ambiguity harass the individual.

III

A clear distinction has for long been accepted between the concreteness of art and the abstraction of philosophy. The difference is that between a world of psychological detail and material description and a much more rarefied atmosphere of timeless generality and speculative thought. In recent times, however, the separate worlds of philosophy and literature have drawn much closer together. More particularly, the most influential writing in France since the war has resulted in what must be called a philosophical literature. Although the continental standing of this literature is high, it has not always been greatly appreciated in England where the metaphysical novel and the theatre of ideas remain alien to the most vigorous native traditions. I also have the impression that we have sometimes misunderstood the origin and the aims of this literature in the course of criticizing it. Some explanation and comment therefore seem in place, particularly since the impulse behind much recent French writing, and also the goal which it has set itself, derive directly or indirectly from existentialism.

The concrete, subjective bias of existentialism has already been emphasized. It will also be clear that the more a philosopher stresses particularity and subjectivity the more he will be obliged to describe metaphysical investigations in their individual and temporal form as immediate human experience. The result has been, in the case of existentialism, that its exponents have readily turned to the novel and the drama as privileged means of self-

¹ Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*. Paris, Nagel, 1946, p. 25.

expression. It is important to be quite clear, however, that existentialist writing is not merely the awkward and arbitrary incorporation of philosophical ideas into literature. Such writing claims to be, on the contrary, an embodiment of *ideas which can only be expressed in their true nature in literary form*, losing much of their identity in the context of traditional philosophical discourse. In fact, existentialist literature is the outcome of the basic movement of existentialist philosophy from intellection towards ostensive definition. The literary qualities of such existentialist forbears as Pascal and Kierkegaard (particularly the latter's *Fear and Trembling* and *The Diary of a Seducer*) are further evidence on this point, and there is of course a general sense in which 'pure' philosophy implies a confidence in logical reasoning which existentialists do not have. Thus it has been argued that the novel was Kafka's only possible means of expression, given his ideas, and in the same way one understands Marcel's claim on behalf of his plays that 'it is in these imaginative works of mine that my thought is to be found in its virgin state, in, as it were, its first gushings from the source'.¹ Later in the same work he adds: 'When we set out to speak about truth, as when we set out to speak about God, we are in danger of speaking about something which is not truth, but is merely its simulacrum. . . . The role of the drama, at a certain level, seems to be to place us at a point of vantage at which truth is made concrete to us, far above any level of abstract definitions'.²

Existentialism is also a philosophy of tension and drama. It sees human character as a constant process of self-transcendence begun in anguish and continued by unrelenting choice between conflicting possibilities. Such a view of the human condition is again most adequately conveyed by demonstration rather than description, and novels and plays can serve its purpose admirably. One gets, as a result, what has often been called a 'literature of the extreme situation'. Such literature is tense and dramatic, as in Sartre's play *Les Mains sales*; its weakness is that it is very liable to become sensational and melodramatic, as in another of Sartre's plays, *Morts sans sépulture*. It sets in motion particular dilemmas and individual circumstances which, at the same time, embody universal truths about man's situation in the world. Sartre himself has said of the existentialist theatre: 'A man who is free within the circle of his own situations, who chooses, whether he wishes or not,

¹ Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*. Vol. I. London, Harvill Press, 1950, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

for everyone else when he chooses for himself—that is the subject-matter of our plays. As a successor to the theatre of characters we want to have a theatre of situation; our aim is to explore all the situations that are most common to human experience, those which occur at least once in the majority of lives. . . . It may well be said that we derive from the Cornelian tradition.¹

These situations in existentialist plays and novels, if 'most common to human experience', are also often those least adequately provided for by traditional moral teaching. They are, in fact, examples of the 'extreme situation' in the ethical sphere. Thus we get such problems as whether the Resistance leader should blow up a German convoy and provoke lethal reprisals against his family and friends, or acquiesce to the Occupation; whether one should be ready to cause suffering with the object of ultimately relieving suffering; whether I should first try to rescue my mother or my wife when both have fallen into the sea and cannot swim; and so on. This type of situation, requiring a wisdom that begins where moral systems end, gives a particular tension and interest to much existentialist writing. The lack of a ready-made answer, and the residue of evil whichever course is followed, also exemplify the existentialist doctrine of universal human guilt and the final obligation to choose and accept responsibility for one's choice.

The view that a man chooses for all men when he chooses for himself has also affected existentialist literature in France. In particular it has placed moral and political responsibilities on the writer which have led to the 'committed literature' of such novels as Sartre's *Les Chemins de la liberté* and Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Mandarins*. Sartre even claims that Flaubert, for instance, was responsible for the brutal suppression of the Commune because he failed to use his privileged gift of language, which he possessed as a writer, in the service of social justice. I think it is important to point out, however, that existentialist commitment has seldom led to mere pamphleteering. It is not the somewhat mawkish commitment, inimical to art, practised by Tolstoy's French admirers of the previous generation, including Romain Rolland. Neither is it the blindly doctrinaire and propagandist commitment, even more inimical to art, of present-day French marxist writers like André Stil. Whereas other forms of commitment have had an ethical or political basis, existentialist commitment is unique in

¹ See *Theatre Arts*, June 1946.

possessing a carefully worked-out philosophical foundation. By emphasizing the ideas of freedom, choice and responsibility it has given to literature a deeply felt contemporary importance without dogmatism. Existentialist writing, although it is concerned with right action on an individual and social level, cannot reach definite conclusions, since it must respect the reader's own sense of responsibility and freedom of choice. This does not necessarily weaken its moral tone and allows it to be committed literature without being propagandist semi-literature. Existentialism has thus brought to the literary scene significant content and a recognition of the reader's autonomy which have done much to make the matter and manner of recent French writing both distinctive and challenging.

IV

The most eminent forbears of existentialism, Pascal and Kierkegaard, were Christian thinkers. More recent Christian existentialists include the Russians Solovyev and Chestov. At the present time Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel are distinguished inheritors of this same tradition. It is clear, therefore, that existentialism possesses some centuries of Christian association and a continuing Christian aspect. Although Sartre has been the dominant figure in France during the last twelve years it would be wrong not to mention Marcel also. His influence has reached fewer people, but it has been deeply felt in some quarters and has had a certain impact in England. In France itself Marcel's ideas have been supported to some extent by the personalist philosophy of the late Emmanuel Mounier, particularly through the medium of his monthly periodical, *Esprit*. And so, although the term 'existentialism' in France since the war has mainly referred to the ideas of Sartre, it has also meant, especially for French Christians, some humane and disturbing works by Marcel. In the end one must, I think, bring the two names of Sartre and Marcel together. As soon as one does so two questions at least arise: (a) what common ground exists between atheistic and Christian existentialism? (b) is existentialism a fundamentally Christian philosophy which has been wrongly diverted, in recent times, into atheism?

A full answer to the first of these questions would require a

separate article at least. Nevertheless, some general idea of the common ground between the two forms of existentialism emerges from a comparison of Marcel's ideas with those of Sartre. Marcel, too, requires a concrete approach to philosophical thinking which is, at the same time, devoid of vague and reassuring generalizations about the human situation. He writes: 'Without there being any question of prophesying or of simply giving way to a fatalism which, for my part, I consider unlawful and culpable, we must admit the extreme probability that we are heading for catastrophes even more terrible, even more uprooting, than those which many of us have witnessed during the last thirty-five years. For my part . . . not only do I not allow that it is possible for the philosopher to abstract from a situation which must unhesitatingly be qualified as eschatological, but I even deny his right to do so.'¹ Marcel also stresses subjectivity. He says in a memorable phrase that the expression 'I am' is 'the existential fulcrum'. In other words he generally agrees with Sartre in seeing the philosopher as being 'in situation' and having the responsibility to anchor his thought in an encounter with immediate experience.

One also finds in Marcel's works a distinction similar to that made by Sartre between authentic and inauthentic selfhood. Marcel insists that we must exercise freedom and make choices if we are to be real people. Granted our *existence* is contingent, we must then choose to *be*. This is the struggle exemplified by a number of characters in Marcel's plays; they gradually discover themselves as 'vocations' and not merely as 'facts'. This is the responsibility which we have towards ourselves, but Marcel also holds that we have a responsibility towards other people. We should not ourselves reduce them to the level of facts, nor should we acquiesce in such a reduction from whatever source it may come. *The Mystery of Being* and *L'Homme contre l'humain* both contain a vigorous condemnation of the increasing bureaucratization of life which registers, regiments and enrols us so that we end by merging into our own identity papers.

These points are perhaps sufficient to show that Marcel and Sartre share a common conception of philosophy as being rooted in immediate existence. Both writers also give a generally similar account of human beings as free to choose themselves and responsible towards others. What they have in common then—the common ground between the two forms of existentialism—is a

¹ Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II. London, Harvill Press, 1915, pp. 166-7.

description of man-in-the-world. They differ in various emphases of course, but the really important disagreement between them arises from the *conclusions* which they draw from this description. This brings us to the second question raised above.

Marcel, in some brief comments on Sartre, complains of the latter's wilful atheism and stubborn secularization of existence.¹ Now Sartre himself has derived much of his thought from Heidegger, but it does seem as though he has emphasized, and perhaps magnified, the atheistic consequences of Heidegger's ideas in a way which the German philosopher has avoided doing. Although Heidegger is certainly not a Christian existentialist he has made use of several Christian concepts and doctrines at least in a partial way. For example, he describes man as being 'fallen' and Christian teaching is clearly at the back of his mind. Also, the sense of dread and estrangement which he stresses bears some resemblance to the Christian view that we have 'no continuing city' in this life. In general, although he does not accept Christianity, Heidegger cannot cut himself off from it entirely. It is of some significance too, I think, that his earliest philosophical work was done on Duns Scotus. One must also add, however, that Heidegger, in his turn, derives much of his thought from the Christian existentialism of Kierkegaard. As Sartre has further secularized Heidegger's thought, so Heidegger has secularized the thought of Kierkegaard. Thus the atheistic existentialism of Sartre is ultimately derived, via Heidegger, from Christian existentialist sources.

In the course of the transference of ideas from Kierkegaard through Heidegger to Sartre the latter appears to have introduced two arbitrary assumptions. His will to atheism causes him to state, almost as dogmatic certainties, that there is no God and that death is the end of all human existence. According to Marcel 'Jean-Paul Sartre . . . claims, very naïvely it must be admitted, to have provided a proof of God's non-existence'.² Marcel himself argues for belief in God and the immortality of the soul from two main positions. Firstly, he differentiates between a *problem* (which can be analysed and solved by intellection) and a *mystery* (which escapes rational analysis, arises out of daily human experience, and can only be responded to by adopting a way of life rather than applying a process of thought). Marcel treats God and

¹ See Marcel, *L'Homme problématique*. Paris, Aubier, 1955, pp. 147-54.

² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

immortality as mysteries in this sense. He even argues that the attempt to apprehend God intellectually—to treat God's existence as a problem to be solved by reason—is to degrade the idea of God. Secondly, in those relations between finite beings which involve ideas such as freedom, responsibility and choice, Marcel finds qualities and values that extend far beyond these finite individuals and must, he claims, be grounded in some transcendent Being. This is an argument, incidentally, which recalls Jaspers' statement that 'freedom is a profound bond with transcendence'. What Marcel claims is that careful and reflective scrutiny of what exists in time eventually leads to one posit a realm of timeless essences (God and immortality).

One can now see, I think, the impasse reached by both branches of existentialism when the question arises of facing the full consequences of their similar starting-points. Christian existentialists hold that the atheistic branch has a closed mind and assumes the non-existence of God and the finality of death without being able to prove them. Atheistic existentialists similarly claim that the Christian branch first assumes the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, and then fails to reconcile these ideas with its original existentialist position. There is a formal similarity between these two charges, and a common dilemma which has become increasingly clear during the last twelve years. In fact, one inclines more and more to the view that the movement does not possess the means of becoming a Christian philosophy without changing its basic character. It is noticeable that the Christian existentialists have all experienced this difficulty. Pascal's wager would be one example; another would be Kierkegaard's statement that 'one proves God's existence by worship . . . not by proofs'. At the present time both Jaspers and Marcel present faith in God as being ultimately self-authenticating and beyond rational demonstration.

Thus existentialism, despite its historical associations with Christianity, appears in the end as a humanist ethical attitude. It is healthily realistic in its concern to describe immediate experience. Its insistence on personal responsibility, on the importance of the individual, on the necessity for right action as well as clear thought, implies a moral position compatible with Christian ethics. In France, indeed, it has played an important role in making Christians reconsider how their faith should be presented and practised if it is to arouse the interest and gain the allegiance of a

new generation. But existentialism, by definition, is not a means of contact with transcendence. Its self-imposed limitations, its method and its humanist spirit prevent it from making complete common cause with natural theology. For the Christian it can be a healthy stimulant to thought and action, but it cannot finally offer a complete account of Christian experience.

REFLEXIONS ON THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

By ROBERT SPEAIGHT

ANYONE arriving in Paris just after the Liberation in 1944 could have sensed which way the theatrical wind was blowing. A new *animateur*—Jean-Louis Barrault—had arisen in despite of the Occupation and all Paris was talking about his production of Claudel's *Le Soulier de Satin*. No one—not even Claudel—had imagined that a play which was divided into four 'days' would ever be condensed into four hours; and the miracle is not so much that this was done at all, for theatrical directors are rather fond of condensing the classics, but that it was done with Claudel's approval and active co-operation. Little more than a week before the première he realized that the great scene between Prouhèze and Rodriguez on the boat wouldn't 'go' in its original form. So he re-wrote it in a few hours and, arriving at the theatre, tie-less and unshaven the next morning, remarked, 'Le Bon Dieu me l'a dictée pendant la nuit'. By the time the last German uniform had vanished from the streets of the capital, Claudel had become a popular dramatist in spite of his *Ode au Maréchal*. A certain margin of folly was allowed to an Ambassadeur de France who also happened to be a great poet.

Claudel was the first to recognize how much the success of the *Soulier de Satin* owed to Barrault. The suppression of the fourth 'day' altogether had given point and cohesion to the play. Barrault's own performance as Rodriguez, Marie Bell as Prouhèze, and Madeleine Renaud as Dona Musica had strengthened it with some of the best talent then at the disposal of the Comédie Française. It is wrong, of course, to speculate how the Comédie Française survives its recurrent crises; the truth is rather that it lives on them. Barrault and Madeleine Renaud left it soon after the Liberation and founded their own company, which was housed for ten years at the Marigny. Now, another quarrel has deprived them of this handsome and convenient home, and they have

become a wandering *élite*, ambassadors of French theatrical culture in every capital but their own. Their record has indeed been remarkable, and although Paris is acutely divided over the Barraults (as it is over most good things in this world and the next) there is nothing else in the contemporary French theatre to compare with their achievement.

At a time when journalism has invaded the theatre, as it has invaded literature, to the serious detriment of art, the Barraults' standards have remained staunchly aesthetic even when they have been boldly experimental. Barrault himself is an incomparable mime and all his productions are subtly *mouvementées*. This was the reproach levelled against his own Hamlet, in Gide's translation, and there were certainly moments when he seemed to overstep the frontiers of theatre and ballet. His success in *Les Enfants du Paradis* was still fresh in people's minds, and, in Hamlet, his pathos was sometimes the pathos of Baptiste. But when he played the part in Edinburgh (not without fear and trembling) the English critics found nothing revolutionary or disconcerting in his treatment of the greatest part in English dramatic literature. Barrault has not quite the scale for a great Hamlet, but his performance was far finer than the French allowed, and his production of the play was intelligent without being highly imaginative. Anyone going to see it would have known what Hamlet was about, and that is a great deal.

The success of *Le Soulier de Satin* was repeated with *Partage de Midi*. The two plays should be studied side by side, for they were both inspired by the same intense experience. *Partage de Midi*, written in 1906 and published in a limited edition of 150 copies, had never been given on the stage, for Claudel had forbidden its production or even its republication. In 1948 he relented and all Paris assembled at the Marigny to see the re-enactment of a story which most people knew in its main details and on which the poet himself would throw further light in his *Mémoires Improvisées*. Barrault himself did not quite carry the guns for Mésa—one needed a sullen baritone and a thicker physique—but the production registered the high-water mark of his skill as a director. To aid him there were Pierre Brasseur with his voice of bronze, conducting his *tirades* with a cigar, and Edwige Feuillère in a miraculous performance riding the deck like a windjammer. London, when Barrault brought the play to the St James's, had not seen acting of this calibre since Bernhardt. There was more stuff in

Partage de Midi than in all the rest of the Marigny répertoire, but it was shaped into cogent form by a rigid refusal of realism. The second act in the cemetery is the greatest thing of its kind since the second act of *Tristan*, yet Mésa and Ysé never touched each other by so much as the tips of their fingers. The effect was volcanic.

Other experiments with Claudel followed. *L'Echange*, which was less successful, clamoured for Feuillère in the part of Lechy Elbernon; and *Christophe Colomb*, though it was produced with great imagination and Milhaud's music, could not quite conceal the hollowness of a text which contained only a single important metaphor. Broadly speaking, Barrault has done more than anyone, except perhaps Jean Vilar, to bring back the poetic dimension to a stage which naturally shuns it. He persuaded Gide to reduce Kafka's *Procès* to dramatic form, but the result was not entirely happy. The torturing, black and white simplicity of the original was somehow missed. Marivaux's *Les Fausses Confidences* was made positively Mozartian by Madeleine Renaud's exquisite acting in the principal part; but Barrault failed to induce his audiences to listen to contemporary plays written in verse. Neither *Magelune* nor Fry's *Sleep of Prisoners* deserved the hisses that were showered upon them. It was tempting fortune, however, to expect even the most ardent Claudelian to appreciate a play constructed on a close parallelism with stories from the Old Testament. Abraham and Isaac do not really belong to the mythology of the boulevards.

Barrault is an ardent Shakespearian, and he has both the appetite and the aptitude for the high style. It was this, no doubt, which attracted him to Henri de Montherlant. Montherlant is a hotly disputed dramatist. Unlike Anouilh in *Antigone*, he brought with him no overtones from the Resistance. A disdainful isolation and Nietzschean cast of mind, with a strong suspicion of pose, had done nothing to make him popular. But he had the weapon of an impregnable style, at once delicate and diamantine, and unlike Claudel he was capable of a certain dramatic detachment. *Mala-testa*, which Barrault produced at the Marigny, with himself in the name part, is a cold play for all its hot Renaissance colouring. The *Maitre de Santiago*, foolishly applauded by the *bienpensants* as a 'Catholic' play, is an implacable study in religious fanaticism. It was superbly acted by Henri Rollan at the Théâtre Hébertot, but not even this performance, nor the powerful lucidity of the text,

could save it from a certain monotony. Its whole argument is really a prelude to a great pictorial 'curtain'. Montherlant has an imaginative sympathy with Jansenism, which here stood him in good stead, as it did in *Port-Royal*, produced with great success at the Comédie Française. The black habits of the Visitation nuns crossing the stage, like the vanguard of an invading army, remain in the mind like the vast white cloak enclosing its victim at the end of *Santiago*; both emblems of a despotic idea, both magnificently theatrical.

Montherlant is less interesting when he is tackling a contemporary theme, as in *Fils de Personne*, which was also given at the Hébertot; and even *Port-Royal* fails a little by comparison with the *Dialogue des Carmélites*. This was Bernanos' sole excursion into the theatre and it held Paris captive for a year. The difference between Montherlant and Bernanos was a difference of vision and also of style. Ultimately it was a difference of dimension. *Port-Royal* was a supremely intelligent recension of Saint-Beuve by a dramatist who had the intelligence to digest, and then to present in quickly comprehensible form, the main issues and culminating event of an historic dispute. Here the style matched the intelligence, with just a flavour (but no more) of the *dix-septième*. But for all that, *Port-Royal* is a play conceived and written from the outside, immensely more interesting than most plays of our time because it deals with people of stature placed in a dilemma none the less real because, for us, it is rather remote. *Dialogue des Carmélites*, though it is much less skilfully put together, is the work of a great writer who understood the supreme temptation of despair, and who—to borrow Mr Raymond Mortimer's simile—used language like a flame-thrower. It is a play written, like everything else by Bernanos, passionately from the inside. The style is in no sense *appliqué*; and we never have the feeling that the martyrdom of the Carmelites of Compiègne has been 'got up' as you 'get up' an historical pageant or an historical novel. It is something which the author himself has lived and imaginatively mastered.

Comparisons are natural between Bernanos and Mauriac, and all the more so because the two men never really appreciated each other. Bernanos returned to France in 1945 after a long and vituperative exile; and the vituperation went on. Only at the end of his life, when he had entered the phase of the *Dialogue* and the projected *Life of Christ*, did he conquer the necessity of a quite unreasonable rage. Polemic and personal anguish had gripped him

for so long that he was unable to be objective when objectivity was most required. He brought all the thunder and lightning of his temperament to the confused situation of his country, but he had neither the patience nor the power to elucidate it. Bernanos was a prophet, and like most prophets he talked at the top of his voice. Many people thought he talked far too much. There was some point in Mauriac's rejoinder to Luc Estang's *Présence de Bernanos*—'Présence de Bernanos! Absence de Bernanos! Absence avant la guerre! Absence pendant la Guerre!' The reproach was not unjustified from a writer who had just emerged from a perilous clandestinity. And when Mauriac invited Bernanos to pose his candidature for the Académie, the refusal, though it was courteously phrased, underlined the difference of spiritual ancestry which separated the two men. Mauriac had his roots in the *Sillon*, Bernanos in the *Action Française*.

Mauriac had been tempted into the theatre by Claude Bourdet, himself an extremely accomplished dramatist and formerly administrator of the Comédie Française. *Asmodée*, which is Mauriac's best play, had been an immediate success. The *ambience* was familiar—the lonely properties and dripping pine trees of the Landes. The penetrating influence for evil of a seminarian whose vocation had gone sour on him was powerfully conveyed; and the economy of Mauriac's method served him well when he came to submit himself to the demands and to exploit the possibilities of the stage. *Asmodée* was followed immediately after the war by *Les Mal Aimés*. This was a purely pessimistic study in personal relationships, also produced by the Comédie Française. The two plays which followed were much less successful and their failure seemed to discourage Mauriac from further essays of the kind. He returned to the novel, and to a journalism whose polemic has never lost its point. Here, by a strange irony, Mauriac has assumed the mantle of Bernanos, applying a rigorously Christian standard to the twisted politics of the day.

Is it something in the quickened tempo of contemporary life which has tempted so many novelists in France to desert their proper medium? Julien Green followed the success of his finest novel, *Moira*, with a play which made a profound impression. *Sud* was a study in homosexuality in the southern States of America and it showed the same mastery both of dramatic form and theatrical atmosphere that Mauriac had shown in *Asmodée*. In each case it seemed that a new dramatist had arrived. Green's

second play, *L'Ennemi*, was even finer. Here the theme was nakedly supernatural, worked out in terms of convincing melodrama. A spoiled monk comes to a château in eighteenth-century France and tries to possess himself of the châtelaine, magnificently played by Muria Casarés. Nothing is more difficult on the stage than to realize the process of conversion—it was a difficulty that even *The Family Reunion* could not quite surmount—but Green succeeds in making palpable the presence not only of the eternal Enemy but of his divine Antagonist. The style of the play sustains, with superb evocative power, its tremendous argument.

The theatre is very close to journalism. Of its nature it must attempt to capture the mood and interests of the moment. It can rarely afford to take a longer view, for unless a play succeeds immediately it must fail absolutely. Herein lies the dilemma of the dramatist; a fifty per cent success is no good to him. And this is one of the reasons why so few plays, even when they temporarily hold the stage, are in any sense works of art. The French novelists—Montherlant, Bernanos, Mauriac and Green—have performed a useful service in bringing to the theatre the preservative of style. It may be objected that the style is literary, but so is the style of Congreve and Wilde and Shaw. So, for all its latter self-denial, is the style of Eliot. It is true that many 'literary' plays never reach the stage at all, or only barely survive there; but it is also true that unless a play is readable it has small chance of entering the canon of permanent dramatic literature. We cannot safely predict permanence for any play, but we can least of all predict it for the play, however skilful in construction, which depends for its success on a present preoccupation or a popular performer. Very few dramatists have the genius or the opportunity to create an enduring style, unless they write something else beside plays. Shaw was a journalist, Wilde was an essayist, and Tchekov was a supreme writer of short stories. Shakespeare and Racine were poets; so, essentially, was Synge. There are not many poets in France and they have not been attracted by the theatre; the novelists have taken their place. One of the best poets, however, Jules Supervielle, has brought his special genius of fantasy to plays which are, in fact, written in prose. *Le Voleur d'Enfants* is a comedy of pure enchantment; the sort of comedy that James Barrie might have written, if he had not been James Barrie.

Most people would agree that the most powerful dramatist in France is J. P. Sartre. In Sartre the philosopher, the novelist and

the journalist all turbulently meet, and his plays are a popular and highly effective expression of existentialist despair. The Christian and the existentialist currents are the determining influences in French intellectual life, and both the Christians and the existentialists tend to look over their shoulders at the Communists. Sartre is an uncomfortable fellow-traveller, with a brave record in the Resistance, and he has a natural aptitude for the stage. The metaphysics which he would indignantly disown, brood implacably over *Huis Clos*. No Christian has ever written nearly so good a play about Hell. *Les Mains Sales* was a splendid essay in irony, and *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* showed, as vividly as anything by Shaw and stripped of the Shavian frivolity, how pure dialectic can serve a dramatic purpose. It was wholly typical of the present Parisian temper that François Mauriac should have walked out of the theatre on the first night. For the French Catholic, desperately *engagé*, blasphemy was too serious a matter to be enjoyed—even with Brasseur and Jean Vilar. Vilar is the second *animateur* to have invigorated the French theatre since the war. He first came into prominence during the summer of 1945 when he produced *Murder in the Cathedral* at the Vieux Colombier in Henri Fluchère's translation. A Voltairean cast of mind did not prevent him from giving an excellent performance in the chief part, and the Gregorian choruses seemed far removed from the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art. Vilar, in association with Gerard Philippe, afterwards founded the Théâtre National Populaire, with its annual Festival at Avignon in the courtyard of the Palais des Papes. Like Barrault, Vilar is an enthusiastic Shakespearian, and the T.N.P. brought its productions of *Richard II*, *Macbeth*, and *Henry IV* to popular audiences in the Parisian banlieue. The company has been criticized for a covert Left-wing ideology, but it has brought the classics—Molière and Victor-Hugo as well as Shakespeare—to a proletarian public which normally never goes to the theatre at all. Its productions are at once simple and vivid; strong lights playing on plain back-grounds, with a minimum of furniture and properties. Copeau's dictum is still remembered: 'Donnez-moi un plateau nu'.

Copeau, with his pure gospel of personal dedication, was the greatest of French *animateurs*. I met him in his retreat near Beaune in the summer of 1945. He talked of Granville-Barker, who had so admired his production of *Twelfth Night*, and indeed no Frenchman had ever equalled Copeau in his interpretation of a Shakes-

pearian play. Barrault has always proclaimed himself his pupil. It was many years since Copeau's name had been seen on a Parisian *affiche*, and now Jovet and Dullin, the eldest and ablest of his successors, have followed him into the past. Dullin will always be remembered for his Harpagon—the sharp, expressive face and the shoulders curved by infirmity—but he was left, latterly, without a stage in France. Jovet, on the other hand, maintained his company and his prestige to the end. He always had the genius to recognize his natural allies, and we owed to him the production of Giraudoux's posthumous play, *La Folle de Chaillot*. Giraudoux and Jovet had done a great deal to make each other, and it was Jovet who discovered Christian Bérard. Bérard's décor for *La Folle de Chaillot* was one of the most beautiful and appropriate settings that have been seen on the modern stage. Jovet died prematurely—like his master Molière, *en plein travail*—and Bérard followed him soon afterwards. By then, however, Barrault was firmly established and his production of a second posthumous play by Giraudoux—*Pour Lucrèce*—lifted us to a level of literary and dramatic invention which no contemporary playwright in France, or elsewhere, has more than momentarily attained.

If we want to measure the health of a nation's theatre, we should look beyond the metropolis; and in France the most hopeful developments have come from the provinces where the State subsidizes a number of dramatic centres. Companies and schools have been established in Rennes, Strasbourg, St Etienne and elsewhere. The Strasbourg centre is under the direction of Michel St Denis, Copeau's nephew and well known of course to British audiences. Two years ago he showed me round his fine new theatre, which was then in process of construction. His production of *Romeo and Juliet* was then playing one-night 'stands' all over the eastern *départements*. These provincial centres generally send their companies to Paris in the summer for a short season; here the promise of acting which has not yet acquired a metropolitan polish, and the virtues of mobile productions, lightly equipped for travelling, are like fresh air blowing through the boulevards.

FILMS FROM FRANCE

A Survey of the Post-war French Cinema

By MARYVONNE BUTCHER

TO take in the whole range of the French cinema, as we have seen it since the war, would demand a panning shot of such extension that only an Abel Gance would dare to embark upon it; he, it will be remembered, is the veteran French actor and director who made a film on Napoleon back in the 'twenties which was designed for projection on three screens simultaneously and effectively anticipated most of the subsequent gimmicks of Vista Vision and its like. And it is, moreover, really hardly possible to discuss the post-war French film without some brief, nostalgic glance back towards the French renaissance of the 'thirties, when it did indeed seem to be the apotheosis of that '*septième art*' in which we all believed more easily then, perhaps, that we find it possible to do now. Many of the directors are still there, and many of the artists who are great today were then just launching out on the careers which are now so established, and it is hardly possible to assess their present achievements without at least a reference to their beginnings. It is not even sensible, for instance, to judge the performance of Jean Gabin in *La Traversée de Paris* or *Touchez pas au Grisbi* without some comparison with *Pépé le Moko* or *La Belle Equipe*; to dwell on the mesmeric performance of Pierre Fresnay in *Le Défroqué* without remembering the tentative strippling of the Pagnol trilogy or the classic French officer in *La Grande Illusion*.

In addition, a highly confusional element is introduced to any such comprehensive view by the fact that some of the most interesting films which reached us only after the liberation were in fact made some time before this, during the years of occupation, and were therefore either influenced by, or in opposition to, the Nazi party line. Of some of the most interesting, in fact, one could

almost say that both alternatives were operative. It is clearly important to remember that after the occupation of Paris and the armistice, all the films made in the country had to be submitted to the *Propagandastaffel* as well as to the Vichy censorship, and though for the most part French directors and script-writers contrived to avoid active collaboration, it was obviously a limiting factor of the widest possible application in the production of films during that period. Some of the greatest directors slipped out of the country altogether—Renoir, Duvivier and René Clair to America, Feyder to Switzerland—and indeed Marcel Carné was one of the few famous directors who actually stayed in Paris, and this gave the younger, less established men a chance to prove their metal. Clouzot, for instance, took the field early with *Les Inconnus dans la Maison* which he adapted from a Simenon story; it is as disagreeable a film as every Clouzot picture has proved to be since—dark, rain-drenched and disillusioned, a world of despair opens before us which even the warmth of Raimu's genius cannot convincingly illumine. It did not reach London until well after the war and, indeed, after the much more brilliant and unpleasant *Le Corbeau*, but still unmistakably showed the springs of the perverse talent that was to mature so coruscatingly with *Le Salaire de la Peur* ten years or so later. Another newcomer to the top rank of directors who also emerged, like some great rock, during this low tide of competition and inspiration, was Robert Bresson, whose work can hardly be over-estimated. It is worth noting that both *Les Anges du Péché*, which so far as I know has never been seen here at all, and *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, which has only been shown privately, were made during the occupation; in such inauspicious days did one of the rarest and most striking talents that the cinema has ever thrown up first make its appearance. 'The Lily of Malud,' wrote Sir John Squire, 'is born in secret mud.'

During this period Carné, the old *maestro*, made two pictures, both of which reached us during the 'forties—hungry 'forties indeed for any French picture on which we could feast our eyes; these were *Les Visiteurs du Soir*, a story set in the Middle Ages, but almost allegorical in its theme of the Children of Light vanquished after all by the Children of Darkness. Prévert's script had all his accustomed grace and sophistication, and the picture was further notable for one of the most splendid opening shots I ever remember—a vast stony plain, seen from an immense height and over it moving slowly, slowly, pygmy figures who presently come

into close-up and are eventually recognized to be heartless creatures from some remote and frozen hell. Nothing could have been more different from the admirable documentaries which British directors were producing at that time. The other Carné was, of course, the fabulous *Enfants du Paradis*; a very long picture set in the early nineteenth century and decorated with stars of such magnitude, giving performances of such virtuosity, that one was left breathless by the sheer copiousness of the fare. Arletty and Jean-Louis Barrault have never acted better, and it was as though under the inexorable clamp of the occupation the whole film had worked up some tremendous pressure of vitality and technical brilliance. Whatever the reason, when it reached us after the war, audiences came dazed out of the cinema as if they had lived through half a lifetime of experience in the darkened hours spent there. Some films transmute and heighten the odd angles of ordinary life, so that never again can some action seem commonplace; leaving Barrault pushing frantically, vainly, through the heartless crowds that lay between him and his vanishing love, and finding just such another crowd in Leicester Square thinned the barrier between screen and reality to a positively uncomfortable degree.

We had been so starved of the authentic French flavour that in the years immediately after the liberation we were prepared to welcome almost anything made in France, and lovingly overlooked faults of mediocrity and even vulgarity, so long as the picture was able to transport us out of our island prison; and even if it were only into the equally closed prison-house of an occupation we had never known, we felt obscurely—but in the event fallaciously as it proved—that we might in this way perhaps learn a little of that grinding humiliation which can never in fact be communicated. So when at last Jean Delannoy's fascinating *L'Eternel Retour* reached us, we felt that, if only we peered closely enough, this unfamiliar work would surely show us some key across the years and the Channel to the labyrinth from which the Minotaur had so lately been driven. As it turned out, however, Delannoy's film and Cocteau's script provided no such key, and were in fact in some curious way actively repellent to English audiences; the flavour seemed distasteful and the gulf between friends, beleaguered on one side, occupied on the other, yawned as widely. From this film at least we could learn no secret.

The paralysis induced in the French industry by the military operations of the liberation campaigns lifted slowly, and by 1946 the studios were for the time being in nearly full production again, so that their output now began to reach us with far less time-lag, and we found ourselves in the bewildering situation of receiving occupation and post-occupation films in no kind of order; grotesque errors over the director's intentions were frequently made by English enthusiasts, and the wiser soon learned to take each film on its merits alone. Now some ten years have gone past: a decade which has seen the meteoric rise of the Italian neo-realist school and perhaps already the beginning of its decline, that has brought to the West the strange, cold, violent beauties of the Japanese cinema; has seen the beginnings of a thaw in the ideological rigidity of the Soviet film and the usual uneven output from Hollywood. It is in this context that the French cinema must now be viewed, not with romantic nostalgia but with a detached analytical eye. It has become slightly the fashion to say that the standard has gone down, that—like *Punch*—it is not so good as it was; but on examination one realizes with some surprise that in fact these years have been studded with films of great brilliance and originality, films that would have greatly raised the reputation of any country of which, perhaps, less is expected. These years have produced a large body of most admirable work, the reinforcement of many established reputations and the emergence of many new ones amongst directors, whilst among actors some individual performances have reached heights as lofty as one could ever wish to see; one only has to recall Pierre Fresnay in *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes*, or Maria Casarès in *Orphée*, or Charles Vanel in *Le Salaire de la Peur*, to prove this point.

It is useful here to spend a little time on the work of two individual cineasts, whose work is essentially French in conception and execution and whose pre-eminence in their profession cannot be challenged, to emphasize the weight of the contribution made by the French post-war cinema to the seventh art today. Jean Cocteau has, alas, publicly stated that he will make no more films, but even if he remains adamant, the work he has sent us since the war is of the utmost importance. *Orphée*, which he made in 1949, was a version of a play he had written some twenty years earlier, though it gives the impression that it is wholly of its medium, and it is almost impossible to realize that it was ever conceived in any terms but the cinematic. Using the by now familiar French trick

of transposing classical myth into modern idiom, and employing every subtlety of a subtle, sophisticated brain in a wealth of visual images that ravish the eye and set the imagination soaring, it is one of the films that justify every hyberbole of the enthusiast. The three major performances—Jean Marais as Orpheus, Heurtebise played by François Périer and the incomparable Maria Casarès as Death the Princess—are of the very highest rank, and the supporting players nearly as good. Just as one cannot read Proust and remain the same, so after seeing *Orphée* the world looks slightly different for ever after and one can never see the police patrols on motor-cycles without shivering at the thought of Death's outriders in their goggles and gauntlets. If, since the war, *Orphée* had been Cocteau's only cinematic work, he would still be amongst the very first on the strength of it, but in point of fact two other pictures by this astonishing figure are more than worth consideration. Both *Les Parents Terribles* and *Les Enfants Terribles* are taken from earlier works; both are brilliantly intellectual, brilliantly uncomfortable and brilliantly acted studies of family union and disunion. The relationship between Yvonne de Bray and Jean Marais as mother and son in *Les Parents* is a heartbreaking diagnosis of a kind of mutual destruction; while the four adolescents in *Les Enfants* who make their own universe of chaos and anarchy in a frowsty disordered room create an atmosphere of physical and psychological constriction almost palpable; a disorganization cruelly emphasized by the discipline and purity of the Bach and Vivaldi concertos against which the story is played out. Cocteau's films could only be made by him; and he could only have come from France. Lucid, precise and disquieting, his films may be insidious, but they cannot be disparaged.

Robert Bresson has made four films since 1940, and they could hardly be more different from those springing from Cocteau's unquiet spirit. Slow, of an almost intimidating integrity, they make the greatest demands on the responses of the audience, as Bresson himself does of his actors, or rather performers, for he prefers not to use professional actors at all. He is reputed to drive them—and himself—well beyond the limits of endurance in his determination to attain nothing short of his whole vision. Not a Catholic himself, he yet has produced two authentically Catholic films, the early *Les Anges du Péché*, a study in the spurious vocation of a proud and self-willed religious; and the never-to-be-forgotten *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*. In prospect one would have thought it impossible

to translate the novel of Bernanos to the screen, but Bresson has brought off a near-miracle with his tenacious fidelity to the author's intentions. Never before, one is tempted to think, has an inner life of tragic complexity been so explicitly transposed into visual images. They recur like Wagnerian motifs—the diary, the pen, the iron grille of the château gates, the bare sodden landscape, the young tortured face—and each is the equivalent of whole pages of the book. Claude Laydu's performance as the young priest is of a dignity and a dedication beyond praise, and the film is one which has gone straight into the very top rank of the cinema for all time: the notices were less criticisms than panegyrics. Bresson makes very few films; nearly six years lie between *The Country Priest* and his latest film which was first shown in England for one performance in this year's festival of French Film in March, and then proceeded to win him the prize for the best director at the Cannes Festival. This is *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*. Using his non-professional actors, Bresson has whipped them into the expression of emotions and situations which, one feels, are less clear to them than to us: moving, compassionate and founded strictly on fact, this story of life under sentence of death in a Nazi prison is quite extraordinary. No judgement is passed, no comment is made explicit; life is projected by an obliquity almost symbolic, and yet the end result is an affirmation of positive faith in humanity. As I said earlier, Bresson is one of the rarest, most monolithic spirits which the cinema has produced, and any country which can claim him need fear little for its artistic vitality.

The work of Clouzot, Cocteau, Bresson, is in itself sufficient proof of the fertility of film-making in France, but they are in no way unique: there are a number of other directors, always competent and sometimes more, at work and the quality of their output is often outstanding. There is Claude Autant-Lara, whose cynical, adult films present the sad reality of a dreary world; René Clément, who made his name with *La Bataille du Rail* and whose most recent *Gervaise*, starring François Périer and Maria Schell, has won an absolute galaxy of prizes for its artistic integrity and sober presentation; and the curiously uneven talent of Léo Joannon whose films have great force and occasional great crudity, which one suspects to be deliberate. And then one must not forget, indeed how could one, the work of the old guard: Jean Renoir, whose father's palette flamed in his magnificent essay in

movement and mass, *French Cancan*, or René Clair who is still turning out films of an originality and wit that make one refuse to credit that he was already doing just the same thing in 1928. Vitality such as this can only be the outcome of an artistic climate—it cannot be a freak of isolated growth.

One should not, of course, be tempted to think that all the best films are tragic or even serious; and to disprove this fallacy there are pictures like the delightful *Fanfan la Tulipe*, with Gérard Philipe, or the work of Jacques Tati, another director-actor whose name was new to us after the war. We saw him acting, with a gentle rural distinction, in *Sylvie et le Fantôme*—an enormous, tweedy, pipe-smoking Frenchman who did not look like one at all; but in *Jour de Fête*, as the village postman to whom everything happened, he made us laugh to the point of pain. This was clowning in the great wordless tradition of Chaplin and Keaton and France's own Max Linder; no one who saw his ferocious futile combat with the wasp, or his appalling misadventures with the tent pole, is ever likely to forget it. Then came his *Vacances de M. Hulot*, in which he spread havoc through the seaside hotel with all the good nature in the world, and was never heard to speak except once, and that his name, and that indistinctly. It is a gem of a film—ironic, detached and acute—and it is with the liveliest anticipation that we await his next picture, *Mon Oncle*. He has been hampered by lack of funds and latterly by ill-health following an accident, but even so his reputation is of the highest, for his is the comedy of kindness, rare enough in all conscience, and all the more appreciated for that.

Not kind at all are the films in one of the more recent schools of French cinema; the fast, tough disillusioned whodunits whose prototype is *Rififi*, and to which also belong *Touchez pas au Grisbi*, *Chnouf* and the many Eddie Constantine films, not all of which reach us here in England. They are, for the most part, grey, realistic studies of treachery in the underworld; admirably acted and directed against a background almost documentary in its authenticity. Wonderfully good entertainment, they seem to predicate a universe on the other side of the law which might just as well be on the other side of the moon. I suspect that if one could only look at them dispassionately they might tell more about the occupation than any high-falutin' allegory; and in the Autant-Lara *La Traversée de Paris* which reached London this year, this 'occupation syndrome' was made explicit. It is not, admittedly, a

purely police film, but it is sufficiently of the genre for the point to be taken: one has only to compare such films with, say, Ealing's *The Long Arm*, or *The Lavender Hill Mob*, to see the glaring difference between the British and the French approach. In the majority of these films the French show very little geniality, the humour is of the gallows type and their view of humanity for the most part disillusioned, though in *Grisbi*, for instance, the loyalty and solidarity which Gabin maintains towards comrades little enough worthy of it, does bring some real warmth to the film. Half the acidity of *La Traversée de Paris* lies in the fact that Gabin, who is apparently cast as a rumbustious rogue, proves in the end to be as cold-hearted and calculating as the rest: a deception that goes slap against twenty years of tradition.

No survey of the French cinema since the war can ignore one of the most influential changes that has taken place here, as in every other national industry this side of the Iron Curtain; I refer, of course, to the rise of the large-scale co-production. Co-productions with America, with Italy, with Britain, are a commonplace, and one is even now announced with Czechoslovakia; from what one can gather from films already made the effect on the French film is less of cross-fertilization than of dilution. What makes the French film so exceptionally valuable is almost always its national virtues of intelligence, lucidity and realism; from the large-scale co-productions what seems to arise is a more feeble amalgam of the less original characteristics of both nations involved, for since the outlay is almost always large, the film must be aimed at a wide and popular public. Hence the insistence on the spectacular charms of Gina Lollobrigida and Sofia Loren, the introduction of Raf Vallone and Curd Jurgens. Indeed, as Robert Bresson remarked rather sourly at his press conference in Cannes, there seem to be only about seven names in films anywhere at the moment, and productions from all countries seem to grow more and more alike. Indeed, one of the few really successful co-productions that I can recall was René Clément's wickedly amusing comedy about a Frenchman in England, called here *Knave of Hearts* and in France *Monsieur Ripois*. The swathe cut through English female society by Gérard Philipe, and the sardonic eye cast by M. Clément over the English scene seem, even so, to have annoyed the greater number of English professional critics who gave the film small credit for the splendid piece of work it undoubtedly was.

It would be a gross over-simplification of the effect of co-production to call it an unmixed calamity, but in the long run it cannot, I feel, ultimately do much good to the French cinema whose genius has always thrived most lustily with its feet planted firmly on its own soil, and has produced all its best work when it has been allowed to be most characteristically French, with the French qualities of intellectuality, sophistication, clarity and uncompromising acceptance of reality. When Italy introduces lushness, America sentimentality or Germany a particularly dangerous form of romanticism, then the corresponding force of the French contribution is weakened. It is therefore all the more heartening to note that there is springing up in France at the moment a whole new school of young directors whose talents seem to be most unequivocally French. At Cannes this year we saw a film by Marcel Camus called *Mort en Fraude* which, though it had plenty of faults, showed great brilliance, and which probed the difficulties of the French in Saigon in a most sensitive and original fashion; his name, and those of Denys de la Patellière, Roger Vadim and Robert Hossein give real reassurance that the French cinema will go forward in its own idiosyncratic way with a constant supply of new names, in spite of the ever-present threat of loss of individuality.

In this survey of the post-war French film as it has reached us here in England, I have confined myself almost entirely to the discussion of directors; space forbids any but the most passing references to the actors who appear in the pictures and none to the designers or the musicians—and the French have some of the best film music in the world—or the camera men who help to make the director's work possible. This is a serious curtailment of the subject, but it is, after all, the director's mind which shapes the film, and though miracles of creation can only be achieved by actor and director in collaboration, as with Fresnay and Delannoy in *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes* or Bresson and Laydu in *Le Curé de Campagne*, yet in the last analysis the director is the film, and I make no apology for concentrating on the work of the French directors. The best of these are the ones who are most essentially of their own country; the cinema cannot do without those ingredients of wit and experience which the French have always excelled in presenting on the screen. We cannot expect them always to be at their best, though we may hope that they will be, but what we can confidently call upon them to give us is a national school, with

the national virtues strengthening its productions; productions unspotted by the grosser forms of commercialism, gaily evading on the one side the weaknesses of co-production and on the other the appeasement of Hollywood. In fact, the kind of cinema which has sent us films like *Jeux Interdits*, *Gervaise*, and *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*, which could have come out of no other country in the world.

FRENCH MUSIC SINCE THE WAR

By ROLLO H. MYERS

THE impact of two wars in twenty-five years was bound to leave its mark on the development of music in France, as on everything else, and it was only natural that by the end of the second of these wars many of the old values had been either discarded or forgotten.

'Modern' French music may be said, roughly, to date from Hector Berlioz, and as the nineteenth century progressed we can trace its development in various directions in the works of such men as Bizet, Gounod, Massenet, Franck, d'Indy, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, and Dukas. As the twentieth century dawned, the course not only of French music but of the whole of Western music as we know it was altered by the revolutionary implications of a series of works in an unfamiliar idiom, signed Claude Debussy. From now on musicians began to speak a different language; the old scholastic barriers were down, stuffy conventions swept away and a new era of harmonic freedom, introducing new and unheard-of sonorities and an entirely fresh and revolutionary orchestral palette, was ushered in. Thus the revolution that had been begun by Berlioz was, in a sense, brought to complete fruition, though on very different lines, by Debussy whose influence on the general evolution of music has perhaps been greater than that of any other single composer in the last century. When his death at the end of World War I was followed by that of Gabriel Fauré in 1924 and the untimely disappearance from the musical scene two years before the outbreak of World War II of both Maurice Ravel and Albert Roussel, it was clear that one of the most fertile and stimulating epochs in the whole history of French music was coming to an end. It is against this background, then, that we have to consider the contemporary scene.

Broadly speaking, it is true to say that French music up to

1939 was mainly represented by the generation of composers who had made their début during, or immediately after, the 1914 war. Prominent among these were four former members of the once notorious group nicknamed 'Les Six'—Arthur Honegger (1892–1955), Darius Milhaud (1892), Georges Auric (1899), and Francis Poulenc (1899). Of the same generation were the late Claude Delvincourt (1888–1954), formerly Director of the Paris Conservatoire and a composer of distinction; Jacques Ibert (1890), now Director of the Villa Medici in Rome where Prix de Rome winners go to complete their studies; Roland-Manuel (1891), distinguished composer, critic, and broadcaster; and Georges Migot (1891). [The *doyen* of living French composers is still Florent Schmitt (1870).]

In many ways Georges Migot (sometimes known as the 'Group of One') is the most original, without being the most revolutionary of contemporary French composers and occupies a place apart. Religious by temperament, and having made a special study of mediaeval music, he makes no concessions to fashions but pursues only his own ideals, claiming to 'obey the promptings of a fervent impulse, an ineffable ritual, an Agency, a Power which enables me to transmit through my work the secret and sacred message to those whose understanding penetrates deeply below the surface. This is not an intellectual conception such as some profess, but a spiritual one. The only unchanging elements (in music) are line and form, melody and architecture, which are revealed through Love and Knowledge'. Migot's output includes large choral and orchestral works, such as *Le Sermon sur la Montagne*, *Psalm XIX*, oratorios, operas, ballets, and chamber music, written in polyphonic style with the emphasis on line and melody rather than on harmony and colour. His music, most of which is deeply religious in feeling and inspiration, cannot be said to be in any sense typical of what is being written in France today, and in any case he belongs to the generation of 'over-fifties'; but because he is to this extent a lonely figure he deserves a special mention before we pass on to consider the more strictly contemporary scene.

There is no doubt that in the twelve years since the armistice French music has acquired a 'new look'. After the 1914 war came the reaction against 'impressionism' and over-refinement led by the 'Six' and Erik Satie in accordance with the aesthetic principles laid down by Jean Cocteau in his brilliant little pamphlet *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*; after the Second World War the pendulum

swung in an opposite direction—back to the austere ‘intellectualism’ of the Viennese atonalists and inventors of the ‘twelve-note’ serial system, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. This seems curious when one reflects that Schoenberg’s earliest atonal works date from 1911, and the first ‘twelve-note’ serial compositions of his and of his disciples from the early ’twenties. It is nevertheless a fact that most of the younger men today in France (and also in Germany and Italy) are writing ‘serial’ music and have taken Webern rather than Schoenberg as their model. The leader of the *avant-garde* in France today is Pierre Boulez (1925) whose experiments in ‘serialist’ technique have gone much further than Webern with the result that the music he is now writing is so excessively cerebral that it has ceased to bear any resemblance to music as we know it. On paper it resembles an engineering blueprint whose significance, though possibly apparent to the eye of a highly trained musician, cannot be apprehended by the ear. Boulez, indeed, claims to have ‘freed’ music from ‘all melody, all harmony, all counterpoint’; for him composing is a matter of ‘arranging sound phenomena along two co-ordinates: duration and pitch’.

Needless to say, these views are not shared by the majority of French composers, although there is a marked tendency among the younger generation to think along these lines. This explains the present vogue for ‘concrete’ and electronic music, the object of which is avowedly to eliminate ultimately the live interpreter or performer altogether so that music will become a complex of artificial sounds produced by manipulating electric frequencies and transmitted through the agency of magnetophones and loudspeakers. What future there may be for these new forms of ‘robot’ music time alone will show, but the general public may be forgiven if it prefers to suspend judgement until presented with convincing proof that these new techniques are not merely being cultivated for their own sake but in order to open up hitherto unexplored fields of musical experience yielding enough aesthetic satisfaction to justify fully the means employed.

Apart from Boulez, I would say that the most powerful influence now dominating French music is still that of Olivier Messiaen (1908) whose teaching has revolutionized theory and practice and created a new trend in French music that is transforming its traditional characteristics radically. Although Boulez was once his pupil, Messiaen works on rather different lines. In the first place

his inspiration is primarily religious, with a strong leaning to mysticism, although the affirmations of faith or feeling with which he accompanies almost every note he sets to paper often have a rather too self-conscious ring to be completely convincing. This attitude on the part of the composer finds an echo in the listener who is bound to have a positive reaction, either hostile or sympathetic, to such declarations as the following: 'All my works are an act of faith and glorify the mystery of Christ. In my inarticulate strivings to express Divine Love I have tried to find music that will be the equivalent of a new Time and a new Space—music that will love and sing . . .' Elsewhere he speaks of the music that corresponds to his ideal as being 'like new blood, a signed gesture, an unknown perfume, a sleepless bird . . . music that expresses the end of Time, Ubiquity, the bodies of the saints, and all divine and supernatural mysteries. . . . *A theological rainbow*'.

And yet there can be no doubt that Messiaen is one of the most accomplished and erudite musicians in Europe, widely cultivated, and an inspiring and influential teacher. From a purely pedagogic point of view his famous treatise, *La technique de mon langage musical*, is a landmark in musical history, and many of his theories and experiments with new rhythmic combinations and permutations introducing new modal concepts, largely based on Hindu and other Oriental models, are both original and of real value. In his use of bird-song in his compositions he has also broken new ground, and is probably the only composer who has ever written for the organ a piece in which the song of blackbirds, thrushes, and nightingales is combined with Hindu rhythms, while one section ends with a 'solo' from a robin (*Livre d'Orgue*, 1952). All this points to a certain naïvete of outlook which is curiously combined with a prodigious technical mastery, so that one is often struck by the contrast between the immense complexity of the language and sometimes startling banality of the underlying musical idea. This is particularly evident in a work like the *Turangalila Symphony* in which a very large orchestra is employed, including a vast array of percussion, which is another instance of the failure of this composer to achieve that perfect synthesis of form and content which is the hallmark of great art. Thus I would be inclined to say that Messiaen's real contribution to the music of our time has been in the field of exploration and technical innovations rather than in the higher spheres of musical creation.

Other members of the group of which Messiaen was one of the

founders before the war, known as *La Jeune France*, are Yves Baudrier (1906), Daniel Lesur (1908), and André Jolivet (1905). These men are all united in the belief that music cannot be dissociated from the main cultural stream or cultivated as a purely abstract intellectual pursuit in which no place is left for 'human' emotions. Baudrier is the author of several symphonic poems and an interesting Symphony which is an expression of the composer's personal reaction to the stress and strains of life, while Lesur, who is in charge of the French Radio's music information services, has written a good deal of orchestral, chamber, and organ music in a style free from either facile effects or ultra-modern eccentricities. The remaining member of the group, André Jolivet, is one of the outstanding personalities in contemporary French music. But whereas Messiaen's output, as we have seen, has been mainly coloured by his own particular brand of Christian-Catholic mysticism, Jolivet has always been drawn to the more primitive forms of religion in which magic and unseen psychic forces play a predominant role—hence his very personal idiom and his conception of the art of music as a cosmic force, a form of incantation, as it were, endowed with magical properties calculated to cast a spell upon the listener. Although Jolivet has, as he puts it, 'liberated himself from tonality', he has never subscribed to the tenets of the orthodox 'twelve-note' or 'serial' school, nor indeed to any 'system' of composition. He is at present musical Director at the Comédie Française, and has lectured and conducted in many European capitals as well as in the U.S.A. His works include a piano sonata, a string quartet, *Trois Poèmes* for 'Ondes Martenot' and piano, the symphonic poems *Cosmogonie* and *Psyché*, *Danses Rituelles*, *Incantations*, and a number of concertos for different instruments, including one for trumpet and one for piano.

Among the 'independents' (although space forbids the mention of more than a few names) must be reckoned such men as Jean Rivier (1896), Marcel Delannoy (1898), Maurice Duruflé (1903), Jean Françaix (1912), Henri Dutilleux (1916), all of whom have written music that is eminently accessible and mostly in the tradition of the French music with which foreign listeners are familiar.

If we turn now to the executant and interpretative side of French musical life we find a state of affairs that is by no means unique in Europe. Concert-giving today has become a matter of big business, and the economic factor, playing a role of ever-

increasing importance, threatens to overshadow all other considerations of a purely artistic nature. The commercialization of all the arts, including music, is in fact a sign of the times in which we live, and the disappearance of the private patron has made it harder for musicians to preserve their independence and at the same time to make both ends meet. And yet the musical life in the great cities, and especially Paris, is intense, and there is no lack of concerts and operatic performances, whether or not they all succeed in paying their way. Thus in Paris alone there are four full-sized symphony orchestras—Colonne, Lamoureux, Pasdeloup, and Société du Conservatoire—which give concerts every Saturday and Sunday during the season before full houses and yet show a deficit. The Opéra and the Opéra-Comique, both State-subsidized, are in a similar position.

These material factors undoubtedly have repercussions on creative as well as executive musicians, and are at least a partial explanation of the present dearth of new operas in France. The fact is, opera is far too expensive today to be a practical proposition, and French composers are naturally reluctant to spend years on writing operas that will never be performed—certainly not in their own country where the State theatres can hardly keep their heads above water, in spite of heavy subsidies and while playing a strictly classical repertoire. Thus, for example, Darius Milhaud's latest opera, *David*, has been performed in Israel, Italy, and the U.S.A., but not yet in France. The only body that can claim to be independent of all such material considerations is the National Orchestra which belongs to the French broadcasting monopoly, Radiodiffusion—Télévision Française. The French radio in general is probably neither better nor worse than in any other country. Fortunately the key post, as far as music is concerned, is in good hands; the music Director, Henri Barraud (1900), is a gifted musician of the highest integrity. He is, moreover, an independent with no axes to grind, and his influence on broadcasting has been wholly beneficial. Economic conditions being what they are, the big concert-giving institutions cannot risk performing unknown works by contemporary composers, and so it is left to the radio to encourage the young composer, and also to teach the listener to appreciate contemporary music. Radiodiffusion even sponsors a 'Studio d'Essais' where experiments are carried on in 'concrete' and electronic music and the like, as well as research into acoustics and kindred problems.

While Paris remains the focal point of musical activities in France, the big provincial cities, such as Lyon, Marseilles, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Nice all have their opera houses and symphony orchestras, and the regional broadcasting centres also make their contribution to the musical life of the nation. Then there are, of course, the provincial Festivals which now take place annually all over France, from Strasbourg to Aix-en-Provence, from Besançon to Bordeaux. These not only constitute definite touristic attractions, but often provide opportunities for giving new works their first performance under the most favourable conditions. Most of the more important provincial towns also have their *conservatoires* where musical instruction is given, but it is of course mainly to the Conservatoire in Paris that students from all over the world come to study in the hope of winning the coveted *Premier Prix* which has for generations launched on their professional career countless violinists, pianists, singers, and composers. For the latter the supreme award is still the *Grand Prix de Rome* which entitles the winner to a three-year stay at the Villa Medici, the seat of the Institut de France in Rome.

Such, then, in brief, is the general picture of music and musical life in France today. The war years, and especially the Occupation, must be held responsible for some degree of disillusionment, cynicism, and moral defeatism which, as we have seen, has fostered in certain quarters a defiant, revolutionary attitude among the younger generation and a tendency to go to extreme lengths to liberate music from what are felt to be the shackles of tradition. But on the whole I feel that the symptoms I have described show a healthy spirit—a questing spirit of endeavour and experimentation which are of good augury for the future of French music.

ASPECTS OF RECENT FRENCH PAINTING

The School of Paris

By DENYS SUTTON

CONTEMPORARY French painting may be justly considered as a microcosm of the extreme diversity and of the many paradoxes that characterize modern art. In Paris, always a centre of vivid intellectual discussion, the conflicts are seen to be sharper, the demands greater than elsewhere. Countless exhibitions in innumerable galleries on the Right and Left Banks, a variety of Salons—the Salon de Mai or the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles—not to speak of the annual exhibitions staged by members of various professions—indicate a widespread interest in art.

Naturally in such an atmosphere, no general agreement reigns as to the exact value of the contemporary movement, still less as to the future of art. On every side artists, not to mention critics and art dealers, continually stake their claims as eager champions of particular solutions maintaining that the directions they advocate constitute the correct routes. So divergent are the views held, so varied the styles adopted, however, that none of the parties struggling to secure the succession of the School of Paris has achieved pre-eminence over the other.

In fact, given the complexities of the present situation, the total victory of any one artist or school would prove extremely difficult. Moreover, the many cross-currents evident in the contemporary French school are highly contradictory: they form an intricate and confusing pattern, one that itself reflects the intellectual and spiritual preoccupations of a revolutionary era, in which the traditional ways of existence are in the throes of being disturbed and distorted so as to conform to a different mould.

In Paris, as elsewhere, the public is being conditioned to accept those new concepts that are gradually gaining currency and

altering our view of the world: the discoveries of science, for instance, legitimize the painters' concepts of space.

Despite the fact that the supporters of each party maintain that theirs is the only way to artistic salvation, we are now more aware than in the past that the artistic character of any given era is not confined to one exclusive trend alone but results from the co-existence of distinct tendencies which often tend to overlap. Moreover, at certain periods the conflict between a variety of styles can be particularly pronounced, as, for instance, in Italy in 1600 or France in 1890. Thus to maintain, as is sometimes done, that all contemporary French painting belongs to the *avant-garde* is incorrect. A powerful contingent of French painters still adhere strongly to what seems to them to be a traditional manner of painting; they will not be dislodged from their positions by the attacks of the younger and more 'progressive' generation.

Here it is perhaps necessary to emphasize that the French school is composed partly of French-born painters and partly of foreigners resident in France. Since early times French artists (as in the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries) have renewed themselves by contact with foreign blood. Indeed, the School of Paris conjures up the vision not of a native group of traditional painters, following a set course, but of a heterogeneous band of artists, drawn from all over the world. Hence, the diverse men who formed the School of Paris between 1910 and 1939—Diego da Riviera, Chagall, Pascin, Modigliani, Gris, Picasso—have been succeeded by a younger generation; Hartung, Staël, Ubac, Atlan and many others besides, who as expatriates owe their artistic allegiance to an international concept of art, not to a national root. Their divorce from tradition (other than artistic ones) may well explain the present complexion of much French painting; in any event, the diversity of styles existing in Paris is part of the particular character of modern French art, one in which challenge, variety, change constitute the order of the day.

The ice, in fact, is constantly being broken by a series of onslaughts from various sources, but no sooner is the pattern disturbed than another is formed. The situation is made still more complicated as a difference exists between the contributions of the old masters of the modern school who have held the centre of the stage during the past decade, and those of the middle-aged and younger men who have replaced them or are in the process of doing so. In other words, contemporary French painting

embraces not only painters like Picasso and Dunoyer de Segonzac who were born before 1914 but others belonging to later generations whose aims and beliefs are quite different.

Again, a distinction must be made between the contribution of the various age-groups, for the obvious reason that while the work of the former is achieving or passing its apex, that of the second group is either just emerging or else verging on maturity. There is, in fact, a difference between the established contribution of the elders which seems to constitute a dominant and irremovable pattern, and that of the 'new men' who may seek to undermine and alter the *status quo*. Valéry's demolition of Anatole France is just one instance of the way in which the taste can alter within a short span of time.

In the immediate post-war period Picasso, Braque, Matisse, and Léger, all of whom have painted some of their most notable works during this period, and the Fauve-Cubist styles of 1905-14, seemed to form the only true modern tradition on which painting could be based. As the spokesman of the 'liberation' generation of Manessier, Le Moal, Pignon, Gischia, Lapicque, a painter like Jean Bazaine was prepared to declare in the 1940's that 'ni fauve, ni cubiste, mais inconcevable sans ces derniers, la jeune peinture française contemporaine et son effort prolongent logiquement celui de ses aînés'. His words certainly describe the origins of much modern French painting, yet ten years later these appear in a rather different light. This is not to suggest that the reputations of the senior members of the School of Paris have diminished (although certain alterations in evaluation have occurred) or that Fauvism or Cubism have lost caste; rather, they are now seen to be not quite as exclusive and dominant as was once the case.

In effect, a series of changes has occurred in our knowledge of the past half century as well as in the scope of painting; these do not necessarily challenge the prominent position of the French school but stress how other centres have also shared in the formation of the younger generation. That such alterations have taken place is understandable, and must be recognized, as without them the present tenor of modern French painting is difficult to assess. In fact, three main changes have occurred in the climate of opinion.

First, the publication of innumerable illustrated art books (tributaries of the 'Musée imaginaire' of Malraux) have made both public and artists conscious to a greater extent than ever

before of a wide range of artistic experience; they have encouraged familiarity with Far Eastern and Primitive art. Now nothing exists to prevent a Western artist from adopting the visual language of the East; in France, for instance, Zao Wou-ki continues that tradition of cross-fertilization between East and West, which derives its historical precedent from *Chinoiserie* and *Japonaiserie*.

Secondly, Paris's position as the centre of the modern movement has altered. Historically, the rise of Impressionism, the importance of the Salon and the universal exhibitions, as well as the competence of the French art trade (which has been well organized since the eighteenth century), have conspired to make Paris the main shop window for modern art during the past eighty years; that no real counter-balance existed in the inter-war years, except in Berlin (where modern art was to be suppressed by Hitler) enhanced her status. However, since the war it has become abundantly clear that powerful artistic currents exist outside France, and in Italy, England and the United States, Morandi, Henry Moore and Jackson Pollock (to mention three very different artists) are names to conjure with. The most stimulating influence on the French school has come from America—above all from Jackson Pollock, the exponent of Action Painting.

Finally the intensive study of the history of twentieth-century art has underlined the role played by some of the senior foreign artists, whose relevance is considerable for the present members of the School of Paris. The Russian Kandinsky, the Dutchman Mondriaan, the Italian Boccioni, the German-Swiss Klee, the Norwegian Munch—all have contributed something fresh to the amalgam: modern art. In fact, the emergence of abstraction as a dominant force not only in Paris but on the international front has directed more attention to an artist like Kandinsky; and in some respects Munich in 1905 (the home of the 'Blaue Reiter' group) has proved as significant as Paris, the home of Cubism.

The leaders of modern art are themselves seen in a different way. A painter like Picasso, intellectually speaking, still has his finger on the pulse of the contemporary movement; yet his contribution to the artistic world of the present time, to the way in which painters themselves work, is more debatable. His contribution, ebullient, brilliant, controversial, seems less pertinent even than that of Claude Monet or Pierre Bonnard, both of whom are immensely appreciated by the school of the 1950's. The latter, for that

instance, long dismissed by many as little more than an anecdotic recorder of the 1900's ('La Belle Epoque'), is now seen as an artist able to endow the familiar with a poetical quality which all the same derives its appeal from an experimental treatment of the surface and of colour—one that foreshadows action painting and 'tachisme'.

One of the main reasons for the neglect suffered until only recently by a painter like Bonnard or for that matter by André Derain is that neither is strikingly original at first sight. Thus they have gone against that view which maintains that the presentation of a new form, irrespective of its quality, is considered as the hallmark of a successful artist. Yet is novelty the main criterion? A painter may surely explore the past, thereby working in what appears to many to be an old-fashioned manner. It is only necessary to recall those earlier masters who deliberately based themselves on their predecessors, incorporating elements from classical antiquity in their painting. Consider, too, in this connexion, the way in which the 'retardataire' but poetical style of fifteenth-century Siena (as represented by Matteo di Giovanni, for instance) is now felt to be closer to modern feeling than the productions of the then more advanced and 'modernistic' Florentine school.

It may also occur that a younger man may be intrigued by problems not far removed from those that engaged his seniors' generation, as can be seen when a typical post-war realist, Paul Rebeyrolle for instance, is compared with an older exponent of such a style like Dunoyer de Segonzac, due allowance being made for the differences in temperament and circumstances between the two men. (In this case, too, both derive a measure of inspiration from a nineteenth-century painter—Gustave Courbet.) Despite the discrepancies in age, attitude and treatment that necessarily occur, their relationship proves that artists exist whose minds tend to move in similar directions; they are members of the same *famille d'esprit*—to use Henri Focillon's term. Nor must it be overlooked that a painter may alter his usual approach in order to respond to novelties, as can be observed in Gauguin's brief flirtation with 'pointillisme'.

The present trend towards Realism suggests that Derain's position, for example, is now more rewarding than Matisse's; this is not to say that the one is more important than the other; only that the problems faced by Derain are more intriguing at this

stage than those treated by Matisse. From Derain, in fact, a painter can learn to use the methods of Corot or Renoir, Courbet or Velasquez as the basis for a personal approach, one that does not lose its validity simply because it is related to the past. Indeed, both points of view—those of traditionalism and experimentalism—possess their relevance. This means, as well, that works of art must be judged not only on account of their historical position (their art historical setting) but for their own sake; this is surely a decisive criterion. If a work of art is a valid statement of intentions within the terms of a chosen context then it assumes a value of its own, irrespective of what seems to be the mode of the moment—due allowance being made for its position within a scale of values.

An artist like Derain, whose influence can be observed on men as different as Oudot, Gruber and Giacometti, has been the subject of renewed interest just because his painting raises the vexed question of the future of figurative art. The implications of this approach are many and varied—the portrait, for instance, can only flourish in terms of figuration. Also, in France it is necessary to differentiate between those figurative artists who rejoice in 'Les Charmes de la Vie' (like Brianchon or Cavailles), those who record the interior conflicts and dramas of humanity (Balthus is an example) and those determined seekers after the bald facts of life (well represented by Rebeyrolle). Here again, an artist can be considered as a Social Realist and yet, as is the case with Rebeyrolle, gradually change tack: he can become more lyrical, more abstract while still employing a figurative, even a realist style. Then, another branch of Realism has found its champion in Lorjou, who employs violent colours, expressionistic in their nature that are derived from Van Gogh and Vlaminck.

Realism, however, has meant different things in different countries and periods; in recent years abstraction, long considered as the dominant style of the Left (the old parallel of 'Modernismus-Bolshevismus' should be recalled) has surrendered in France to Social Realism, where now, as in Italy, it is usually the appanage of the extreme Left. Naturally, such a style, with its possibilities of direct contact, can prove valuable in expressing a radical attitude; for instance, it is historically understandable that a Realist like Gruber should have appeared to render the poignant bereavements and dark mood of the 1940's.

The fascination of French painting, as it passes before the eyes in innumerable galleries and studios, is its variety, its refusal to ever

stay put; since its quality is akin to that of quicksilver, the difficulties of definition are considerable, especially with the Abstract artists. Broadly speaking, and no more than that, the Abstract painters follow two main trends: there is the geometrical purist party, which has its roots in Constructivism and Mondriaan (and to some extent in Cubism), and the emotive party who aim at giving a mood, a state of mind. It also includes those who hover on the brink, 'frontaliers', like Raoul Ubac.

However, painters are not in any way bound by adherence to either party; they can, and often do, move from one group to another, embracing different styles at each stage of their career. In general, the trend has been away from the geometrical approach in favour of non-figurative painting with a more emotional and personal tinge, a departure partly inspired by the influence of 'action-painting', the 'other art' or 'tachisme' (to use the terms employed to designate the most controversial and pervasive movements of the time).

As is nearly always the case with any 'novel' approach, especially one as wide and amorphous as 'action painting'—the term is used to cover all the trends associated with the movement—the epithet employed is little more than a shorthand definition to describe a technique and a state of mind. As this is the case the essence of this style can only be gauged at a stage like the present when each painter's particular contribution is analysed; only on the basis of such findings can the general character be given.

Although various interpretations of this movement, above all 'the other art' wing, have been advanced, this style basically consists of a return to an interest in the properties of paint. This fervent desire to renew the stuff of painting inspired Jean Dubuffet's 'hautes pâtes', which illustrate his view that a painting has a right to exist in its own right as much as an object which forms the basis of a picture. His own words stress the point: 'Les couleurs que je trouve dans un caillou, dans un vieux mur, je les trouve plus savoureuses que celles des rubans et des fleurs. . . . Il me plaît mieux de trouver dans un tableau des couleurs qui puissent se nommer: sable, mastic, limon, ficelle, plutôt que jaune de chrome, bleu de Prusse ou vert Véronèse'. However, it seems to him that painting can only be renewed by a phase of anti-painting, evident in his 'careless' handling; but this is not necessarily accompanied by non-figuration.

That the aim of such experiments is to enrich the artist's range

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and to expand the borderlines of painting comes across in the way in which texture is treated by Soulages or the surface given a 'poetical' effusiveness by Wols, Fautrier or Bryen; here colour is permitted to evoke (as in Redon's pastels) a world of magic and dreams, one rendered more suggestive by the avoidance of subject matter; the legacy of surrealism (evident in the more recent works of Max Ernst) has here borne fruit. The avoidance of an overt subject is no hindrance to the way in which painting can be made to speak, as may also be noticed, for instance, in certain canvases by Hartung where black and mauves depict moods of melancholy and pessimism.

That colours and forms can correspond to a state of mind in an abstract or non-figurative painting is evident in the work of Nicolas de Staël, the young Russian-French painter who died in 1954. His early non-figurative period stands out from all his contemporaries by reason of its compelling intensity and as a prelude to the creation of that personal technique (blocks or slabs of pigment) which enabled him to revolutionize French and European painting in the 1950's. His evolution from a non-figurative style, highly charged and emotional, to a figurative one in which Nature was compelled to yield fresh secrets also serves to stress one of the main problems of our time—that of determining how a painter can express his views about life, nature and human forms if he adheres to a non-figurative manner.

Abstract or non-figurative painting (the one breaking down a subject to its essential formal and colouristic qualities, the other presenting an emotional or cerebral image) can reveal subtleties, mysteries, and impressions both concerning the visible as well as the invisible world; it is also clear that such painting is unable to encompass those themes and give those pleasures which are the property of figurative painting alone. The fact of the matter—as French painting reveals—is that there is no valid reason to compel the painter to work in one style to the exclusion of the other. One of the major contributions of modern French art is that both wings possess virile and competent exponents, who stress the possibilities and potentialities of artistic co-existence.

To turn in a number of different directions and examine countless propositions, in fact, is a sign of vitality and also of the restlessness of an age (manneristic in its general temper) which has been compelled to come to terms with pessimism, nihilism and fear. To name the ideologies or beliefs or lack of beliefs that mark

our period and consciously or unconsciously direct the artist's imagination would require a profound study of contemporary literature and philosophy—the problems posed by Sartre or Camus are shared to some extent by certain of their colleagues in the world of painting.

Yet it would be mistaken to consider modern French art as only representing a materialistic point of view. Just as much as in the past, secular and religious art flourished side by side, the same parallelism can be discerned today—think only of certain pictures by Manessier and Gleizes, Rouault and Matisse, not to speak of the fascinating revival of ecclesiastical architecture. Even a bare allusion to these problems suffices to indicate that our view of the whole scene must never be simple; the range of art is as complex and varied as that of life.

FRENCH ARCHITECTURE SINCE THE WAR

By LANCE WRIGHT

IT was customary in the 'thirties to speak of the new kind of architecture which was then emerging as 'the international style'; but since then this 'international style' has produced as rich a harvest of national variations as any other. There are, it is true, a small number of buildings put up every year which acquire international standing and which serve to remind us that *modern architecture* is something which can be universally recognized, if not clearly defined; but alongside of these few pacemakers there is a very great volume of building which shows their influence but which shows also the earthy marks of the national tradition. In reviewing the architecture of any country during any period we are concerned in the first place with the contribution made to the small stock of world-wide exemplars, but we are also concerned with the human value of the nation's building, with the average quality of the sort of new building which you see from the train.

Anyone who attempts to draw up the balance sheet of French post-war architecture under the first of these heads will be struck by the extent to which France's stake in modern architecture properly so-called is identifiable with the work of the Swiss-born le Corbusier (or 'Corbu', as it seems now fashionable to call him). From one point of view this is a very ample stake; for it is mainly to 'Corbu' that modern architecture owes its *raison d'être*, its lofty social purpose and its determination not merely to provide fine buildings (whatever that may mean) but to solve the fundamental problems of modern living.

From another point of view, however, this practical identification of the cause of modern architecture in France with 'Corbu' has its inconvenience. For one thing it is becoming apparent as the years go by that despite his compelling doctrines and his unquestioned mastery of building form he has been unable either to create a 'school' or to evoke a widespread response to his ideas

among Frenchmen. He is now nearer seventy than sixty: he has been active, *very* active, since the end of the First World War (with only a period of respite during the second): by rights a new generation of French architects steeped in his ideas should have reached the age of receiving important commissions. Yet this has not happened. As an embarrassing consequence the only buildings on French soil to have reached international status during our period are those which he designed himself: the two 'Unités d'habitation', at Marseilles (completed 1951) and at Nantes-Rézé (completed 1954) and the little pilgrimage church at Ronchamp (completed 1956). Important as these are, they remain, quantitatively, a startlingly meagre harvest for so great a nation during so busy an epoch. It is true, of course, that 'Corbu' has been at work abroad (at Chandigarh, for instance); also that there is in the world another French architect of international standing, Marcel Breuer in America: but the fact remains that in France herself the sources of authentic architectural inspiration seem in real danger of drying up.

As we shall see, the evidence of the common run of new French buildings tends to confirm this impression; but before turning to this, something must be said of the contribution of these three classics to our stock of architectural ideas.

Of the two Unités d'habitation it is only the first which signifies, since that at Nantes is only a cut-down version of that at Marseilles. This first Unité d'habitation represents the crystallization of an idea which has haunted architecture at least since the late nineteenth century: the idea, namely, that since our command of structure permits it, there is no reason why all the functions of a town should not be gathered together in a single building, with all the saving in services, space and people's time in getting about which this would bring. It is true that the actual content of the first Unité d'habitation—337 apartments accommodating from 1500 to 1700 people with shops, clubrooms and a nursery school—does not add up to a town; but the accommodation of all these within a single rectangular plan and the generous internal 'streets' establish that the essential thought has been realized and that we are in the presence, not of an overgrown block of flats, but of a new ideal of urban living. This, in solid concrete, is 'la ville radieuse', with its large balconies (which could at a push be thought of as small gardens), its family dwellings, some larger, some smaller, which fit into the massive frame-

like drawers in a *taille bois*: and above all, with the countryside starting, not half an hour's walk away, but at the foot of the lift. Whether or not the form of life posed by the Unité is found lastingly acceptable, it is not possible to deny its extraordinary sociological interest or the contribution it has made to the strictly architectural problem of the very large building. This problem which is, in effect, how to ensure that something which by ordinary human standards is very large indeed, should not oppress with its bulk, has led to the development in Great Britain and America of the glass-curtain wall. The curtain wall lends to the structures which it clothes an evanescent and airy quality. In the two Unité's 'Corbu' has managed the opposite trick of making his mammoth structure appear as an extension of the natural landscape. It is not clear how he has done this and we can only guess that it has something to do with the fact that he is the only modern architect with a serious theory of proportion.

The church at Ronchamps is an achievement of a very different kind. It was, indeed, one of the great post-war architectural surprises that 'Corbu' should have consented to build a church at all, for every building of his has been in the nature of a personal gesture and he has at no time given any indication of religious belief. That he did so consent and that he should be now engaged on a Dominican Priory at Evreux is due in part to his friendship with that great man the late Père Couturier, O.P., who opened the minds of so many in the older generation of the modern movement to the possibility that Catholicism might be true.

It has always been assumed that authentic 'modern architecture' was incapable of providing a church, since it was assumed to recognize only material function (enjoying in this something of the reputation of Aristotelianism before St Thomas) and because a church was always presumed to owe its form to other, more intangible, considerations. This view of things dies hard and certainly the grisly crop of so-called 'modern' churches which has sprung up since the issue was first formulated have done little to dispel it. The pilgrimage church at Ronchamps is a very personal achievement: it is not in any sense a prototype, nor does it add anything to the key problem of church building, which is a problem of planning and liturgy and of finding the correct physical relationship between priest and people. It does, however, establish beyond all question the existence of a common ground between our new

architecture and our old belief and it establishes also (and this is no small thing) that for today's people the sense of God's presence is produced more readily by careful control of the quality of light than by any form of historical reminiscence.

The period we are considering is, for architecture and for all countries, a period of revolution: of revolution both in technique and in sensibility. In America where there is a traditional welcome for anything new, the tempo of change has been rapid, but in Europe it has generally been slow and in France (as in England) the revolution in technique has been somewhat ahead of the revolution in sensibility. This has come about very naturally because building is expensive and because those who control money are more easily impressed with the need to adopt a more efficient technique than they are to sanction an unfamiliar appearance. Thus it is that though the structure of most post-war buildings, in France as in England, is of the 'fifties, the outer skin is usually of the 'thirties. But in France, it seems, there is an influence at work which is more deep-seated and pervasive than the kind of conservatism which can be attributed to clients. This influence seems to stem from the prolific marriage between ferro-concrete and the Beaux-Arts tradition of architectural design which occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is not easy to describe in a few words the kind of building which this marriage produced: their plan was axial, their structure was post-and-beam, and on this was grouted and strapped the most accomplished masonry adornment that has ever been seen. With changes in taste and budgeting the adornment has mostly gone, but the bones of this collaboration have remained. Its legacy is twofold: there is a legacy of taste and of forms, but there is also a legacy of interpretation, of 'architecture as a Fine Art' and of what the architect's job is. It would be wrong to decry this great tradition out of hand, but it is important to distinguish it from 'modern architecture'. The last great exponent of the tradition was undoubtedly Auguste Perret who died only in 1954. Despite his occasional departures into the unusual (e.g. his church of St Joseph in Le Havre, which is not yet completed) his great achievement was to paraphrase the forms of traditional architecture in reinforced concrete. His attitude might be represented as 'here are some splendid new materials: can we not use them to produce effects which have given so much satisfaction in the past?' The legacy of taste and form which Perret and his predecessors have

bequeathed to French Architecture is most noticeable in the insistence on the post-and-beam expression and in the importance given to frames. It is very noticeable that the 'curtain wall', which is a cliché in England and in almost every other European country, is hardly ever seen in France, and when it may be said to exist, care is taken that it is not expressed. For the 'curtain wall' draws a sheet of panelling—whether glass or opaque—over structure and void alike and reduces framing to a hair-line tracery. A good example of the lengths to which the French will go to avoid this effect is the new Lorraine-Escaut building at the Rondpont Bougeaud in Paris (architects L. J. Demaret, R. Busse and J. Zimmerman), of which the supporting structure is light steelwork and the cladding is in fact a curtain wall; but the frames of the cladding have been so thickened that at a quick glance it appears to be a reinforced concrete building. This is only one, and a comparatively subtle, manifestation of the Beaux Arts tradition as it affects industrialized buildings; but more damaging in its effects than any of these stylistic atavisms is the second legacy, which appears to take the form of a certain restriction in the scope of architecture. To the average French architect of these years architecture is emphatically a 'Fine Art' and is to be treated primarily according to the rules of Art: the architect receives the client's brief and then proceeds to design a building according to these rules, using the products and techniques and skills which are readily available. There does not seem to be in France any sign of that awareness (which is so marked among English architects) that in a time of rapidly changing technique it is the duty of the architect to take his duties more seriously than this: that since our building resources are so different from what the man in the street imagines, it is for the architect not to accept the client's version of the accommodation he wants, but to examine carefully what it is he wants to do inside his building and to make his design from that. Furthermore, where it is a matter of a considerable programme of building, the best English architects of these years have not been prepared to accept such manufactured components as are available on the market, but have insisted on compelling manufacturers to 'develop' new components which will fulfil their purpose better. It would certainly be unjust to say that no French architect argues with his client about the 'brief' or that none have carried out 'development work' with manufacturers; but it is certain that nothing has been done in France along these

lines comparable to the work done by the architects to the British Ministry of Education.

In a sense it is not fair to compare the English and French post-war schools, since schools are the solitary English post-war architectural success: nevertheless the comparison does bring out very well the difference between the two approaches—and their fruits. The English schools' architects, accepting the more strenuous definition of architecture proposed by le Corbusier, were enabled not merely to produce one and a half million new school places to time but to cut the effective cost of each of these places by nearly a half and to produce a crop of schools which on almost every count are qualitatively better than the kind of school which everyone had in mind before the programme was begun. The French schools' programme was also superintended by a central authority, but no 'development work' was done either on user requirements or on building methods and the programme was compromised at an early stage by the compulsory standardization of a classroom plan which had been rejected by the English MOE on irrefutable grounds as long ago as 1949. From the human point of view the great difference between English and French post-war schools lies in the attitude towards institutionalism. Whereas the English decided to make their schools as 'domestic' as possible and to diminish the effect of institutionalism, the French intensified it. This French bias was in part accidental, and due to the fact that their standardized classroom compelled them to use very long corridors, but it was in part the natural effect of the Beaux Arts tradition, for the first instinct of an architect trained in this tradition is to make 'a fine building'. It was doubtless this instinct which led to the formulation of the concept of the 'Cité Scolaire' (of which formidable examples can be seen at Brest and Amiens), which is, in effect, a congeries of vast buildings, laid out in the grand manner, where children of all ages assemble to undergo the rigours of the French educational system.

Similar influences can be seen at work in Housing and Town Planning. The planning of the modern town is an art for which no one has produced a convincing formula, perhaps because sufficient data are lacking. In these circumstances it may be argued that the French perseverance in eighteenth-century planning (e.g. A. Perret's plan for le Havre) is justified. At the same time it must be admitted that this approach, being as it is from the outside in-

wards, and leading to the disposal of buildings in long anonymous cliff-like blocks whether they contain offices, shops or flats, presupposes that we know much more about the function of a city than we do and tends to inhibit a truly critical approach to the different buildings. This fatal preference for 'massing' as it is called (i.e. the disposal of buildings in very large blocks) must have contributed to the creation of that very characteristic French post-war housing plan which involves a long continuous zig-zag some twelve or fifteen stories high and perhaps a quarter of a mile long. Good examples of this are Jean Fayeton's 'Immeubles collectifs d'état' at Rouen (1950) and E. Baudouin's prize-winning experimental housing at Strasbourg (1952). It may have been the reaction against this kind of habitation which triggered off what may prove to be a fundamental change in the town-dwelling Frenchman's preferences for a home. Up to the war, English motorists have been in the habit of congratulating France on the compactness of her towns. This compactness was due, of course, to the fact that the average French townsman preferred a flat. This preference was indeed shared by most continental peoples and was reflected in the circumstance that on the Continent (in contrast to England) flats are cheaper to build than single dwellings. Since about 1950, however, there has in France been a swing towards the single dwelling and there are signs that the French cities have embarked on an era of suburb building comparable to that which was unleashed over here in the 'thirties. This is an alarming prospect, for the French speculative builder, when he gets the bit between his teeth, makes our own seem a man of culture by comparison.

To close the account of the architecture of so great a country on so despairing a note would be to give a false impression. This year Paris should see the completion of her first important post-war modern building, the Headquarters of the United Nations in the Place Fontenoy, by the expatriate Frenchman Marcel Breuer, the native Frenchman Bernard Zehruss and the Italian Pier Luigi Nervi, and this must surely exert some influence for the good. Again, the French structural engineering tradition, which on the whole is so much less uncouth than our own, has been carried on through our period (we think particularly of the Barrage-Usine at Genissiat by Albert Laprade and Pierre Bourdeix) and this remains a potential asset which any English architect would envy.

Another initiative which should be noticed here is the formation (in 1952) by Andre Bloc, the Editor of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, of the 'Groupe Espace', a group of architects, painters and sculptors who have banded together to promote a new understanding between their three arts. It is very characteristic that, in this critical time, the French architect intellectuals should seek further inspiration among their other artist friends while English architect intellectuals should be seeking the more disagreeable company of scientists and manufacturers. Nevertheless no one who has knowledge of how architectural form has developed in our civilization would deny that ideas of form have generally been initiated among figurative (or non-figurative) artists and have passed from thence into architecture.

Lastly, though it will seem odd to bring the Church of France into this discussion (for church building has contributed nothing in our time to our stock of architectural ideas), yet it is worth signalling a fruitful state of mind, not particularly among French church building architects, but among certain sections of their clients. After all, there are two marks by which you can always distinguish the authentic 'modern architecture' from the many spurious versions which abound. One is what we in the Church call 'the spirit of poverty' and the other is the determination to make a fundamental approach to human problems. When we review the Catholic peoples of the world it is noticeable that these two 'marks' are most developed among certain sections of the French. These sections have not yet acquired an architecture of their own—excepting perhaps the little square wooden church 'Saint-Andre de Nice' built for 60,000 francs for the Abbe Pierre's chiffonniers—but it is presumably only a matter of time before they give birth to one, and when they do it will surely be the real thing.

FRANCE AND EUROPE

The Political Contribution Since 1945

By JOHN DINGLE

FEW people realize the true scope and feeling of the European idea. Few understand that it is revolutionary in the sense that all revolutions have to be founded on doctrine before being translated into fact.'

These words quoted from an article in *La Nef* by Robert Aron, a leading federalist, represent what many French people regard as the proper attitude to the European Movement. They are strongly reminiscent of a remark by Edouard Herriot, writing on the same subject between the wars. In his book, *L'Europe*, he spoke of the traditional French view that ideas can create facts.

Unfortunately in this case, after a promising start, the revolution hung fire and gave time for another French tendency to manifest itself. The French can be inspired to tremendous energy by an idea, but they are also the disciples of Descartes, and when the original energy is spent they will fall on the idea, tear it into small pieces and put each one under the microscope. That is, in essence, what has happened in the case of the European Movement.

The origins of this in France go back well before the second world war. French thinkers had played with the idea for centuries, but the first initiative in the modern context was that taken by Briand in 1929. He then proposed before the General Assembly of the League of Nations a federal organization for Europe in which—a strangely hesitant conception—there should be no sacrifice of national sovereignty. This point, though Briand made much of it, was perhaps not so restrictive as it seemed. Herriot explained it away, in the book already alluded to, by pointing out that national sovereignty is inevitably limited by public treaty, just as private liberty is limited by the existence of contracts. He also expressed

the very French idea, which has again cropped up in the post-war period, that federal European institutions will follow and not precede a federal grouping of Europe—'ideas can create facts'.

Herriot quoted the French historian Jacques Lambert in support of his idea. This writer had pointed out that the federal constitution of the United States, far from emerging fully formed from the American Revolution, had been the slow development of years. The motto of Herriot and Briand was in effect, 'Softly, softly, catchee monkey'. Though they regarded the construction of Europe as an absolute necessity, they felt they had time on their side. Within a few years Hitler was to prove them wrong.

Their movement was little more than academic before the war, though its importance should not be minimized. After 1945 the whole climate changed. France was theoretically one of the victors but she recognized her own exhaustion and had not lost her fear and distrust of Germany. The Third Republic had failed her and she had no exaggerated hopes from the Fourth. In such circumstances a large section of French opinion inevitably turned with enthusiasm to radically new solutions. The European idea ceased to be merely academic. Federalism had its heyday in France in the late 1940s, and if it did not quite reach revolutionary proportions, it was a creative idea that might have come to something if the spark had not been extinguished in the English Channel.

The French are proud of their clarity and their logic but like most other people they are bad judges of themselves. As a corrective let us turn to a writer who fulfils perfectly Chesterton's description of 'the expiation for the English tripper'—the English exile unaffectedly devoted to some particular foreign culture. In his book on France in Benn's 'The Modern World' series, the late Sisley Huddleston wrote:

We shall find that the spreading of the ideas of the philosophers of the eighteenth century was possible because the French as a people are fond of generalizations and are at once metaphysical and romantic. They are far less logical than they themselves suppose and in the application of their principles they falsify them.

The truth of this judgement must strike anyone who has much dealings with the French, and it explains a lot in the post-war history of the European Movement.

This was dominated, not by one clear general idea, but by several contradictory ones, and it is difficult, looking back, to distinguish motives from arguments. To take an example, M. Schuman and his supporters made full use of the argument that Germany's aggressive potential must be eliminated by inserting Germany in Europe. Such advocacy had much to do with the success of what remains the most important single contribution to European integration. Robert Schuman himself described the plan as 'essentially a political act', but we should do him an injustice if we failed to discern the conviction that lies behind it. Whatever his estimate of the German menace, Schuman would have believed in the absolute value of his plan just as Adenauer and de Gasperi believed in the Europe they laboured so hard to create.

In point of time, the European Coal and Steel Community—the Schuman Plan in being—came at the moment when the first energies of the post-war European Movement had begun to decline, and it did more than anything else to save that movement from extinction. The previous few years had seen a hard struggle between Britain and France over the structure to be given to the Council of Europe. The French had fought with vigour, and sometimes with bitterness, to impart a federal character. They failed because they wanted Britain in Europe more ardently than the British wanted to be there themselves. Though for so many Frenchmen the European idea seemed revolutionary, they were not prepared to risk a revolution in their foreign policy to achieve it. The Socialists were the most insistent that Europe must include Britain if it was to come into existence at all. This was a traditional position with them reinforced by a number of contemporary factors. They had all the same reasons as other Frenchmen for fearing a Europe dominated by Germany, but also—and they were quite frank about it—they did not want a Europe in which either Catholics or business and technical interests would have the last word. Two Labour Governments in Britain had moreover produced the mirage of a Europe that would not only be united but would be predominantly Socialist.

In retrospect, it is surprising that Robert Schuman managed to get away with it. One would have expected the British refusal to consider any submission to a supranational authority to have spelt the end of his plan. He succeeded, however, by the very thing for which he was most criticized in England. He rushed

France and the other countries concerned into the Community before they had time to catch their breath and think of sufficient really damaging objections.

The Schuman Plan was submitted to the French Council of Ministers on 9 May 1950. That same afternoon M. Massigli made it known to Ernest Bevin and Dean Acheson, who were about to meet M. Schuman in London for the three-power conference of that year. The Ambassador informed them that the French Foreign Minister proposed to raise the matter during the discussions—a big surprise, as there had not been the slightest inkling of it during the preparatory conference between experts of the three countries. The Germans seized on the idea avidly, and this initial enthusiasm was never given a chance to die down. Within a matter of days M. Jean Monnet had been detached from his work as Commissioner for what was up to then 'The Plan', and was on his way to London for discussions with the Ministers and experts gathered there for the meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Council. He had already seen the American High Commissioner in Germany, who, with his British and French colleagues, was still responsible for Western Germany's foreign relations.

In any consideration of the European Movement in France, Monnet is a key figure. We find him coming into the picture as a public servant, and his career had already shown him to be one of the most remarkable *hauts fonctionnaires* in Western Europe. We might have expected him to remain in this category—as a kind of international higher civil servant strictly applying the policies of the governments he served—but besides being a hard-headed practical man Monnet is also something of a visionary. With him the revolutionary idea is busy producing facts and his personality is impressed indelibly on the European Coal and Steel Community of which he became the first Secretary General. When he left this post it was to devote his energies to restoring to the European Movement the impetus it had lost through Britain's refusal to consider any real surrender of national sovereignty and through the failure of the European Defence Community for which France has to accept at least equal blame.

In her excellent book on French politics published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Mrs Dorothy Pickles makes an interesting comment. Quoting M. Schuman's belief that the members of the High Authority of the Coal and Steel

Community would identify themselves not with their individual countries but with the Community they served, she writes:

The idealism which inspired this belief that nine experts, whose lives had presumably, up to the time of their nomination, been spent as citizens of their own countries, could in a flash throw off their national background and reach unanimous decisions by the light of internationalism and scientific reason alone—the belief that truth, like the French Republic, would be ‘one and indivisible’—was wholly French, the authentic heritage of Descartes, Rousseau the Revolution and positivism. It was magnificent, even moving, but to Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians it was not twentieth-century politics.

The basic point seems, *a priori*, to be valid, though we cannot but quarrel with Mrs Pickles’ flamboyant presentation of it. Yet experience has proved her completely wrong and M. Schuman right in his prediction. The High Authority has fulfilled his most hopeful expectations, and the reason may be that Rousseau and positivism are not the chief influences in M. Schuman’s life any more than they form such a determining factor in French development as Mrs Pickles seems to think. M. Schuman’s mind in particular and the French mind in general have been largely shaped by other and better influences, enabling them to form sounder judgements on their fellow men than the writer credits them with. M. Monnet himself is fond of remarking that the institutions make the men. In other words, if you provide an organization with the right aims, and governed by the right principles, you will find the men you need. By proving this in practice the European Coal and Steel Community has made an even bigger contribution to future European integration than by the sharp upward turn it has given to production graphs.

While the Coal and Steel Community was still in preparation, the French were launching their second great plan—for the European Defence Community. This was as monumental a failure as the other is a success. The full story is too complex to be outlined here, but it is worth while pointing out one important difference between the two plans. The first was recommended by the argument that it would eliminate the danger of the Ruhr becoming once again an arsenal of German militarism, but this was nothing more than a piece of pleading—sincere perhaps but, as subsequent history has proved, inessential. German industrial

power will never again become the chief threat to European security, though German military weakness may.

The Pleven Plan on the other hand was never anything more or less than an attempt to shackle Germany. The French were at one time willing to tie their own hands in order that they might be allowed to tie their neighbour's as well. It was not a healthy foundation on which to build European institutions even though it might have served for want of something better. If, in the fullness of time, a European Army is constituted under a European Defence Ministry it will be based on trust and not distrust, for the last two or three years have seen a remarkable improvement in Franco-German relations. A mutual antipathy between these two countries is no longer the dominant factor in Western European politics.

Whether the European Defence Community was a good plan or not, it submerged many hopes with it when it sank, and it was fortunate that the Coal and Steel Community in Luxembourg had already acquired sufficient buoyancy to survive the commotion and even to inspire new efforts.

Pre-war federalists would have blenched at the idea of a European Army. For one thing there was no external danger to call it into being. Russia's ideology had detached her from her neighbours but had not yet given her the military strength necessary to subjugate them. The integration to which Briand, Herriot and others looked was thus exclusively economic and juridical. When he presented the Pleven Plan to the Council of Europe, M. Schuman himself remarked that the French Government was attracted to European solutions more and more because it was convinced that they represented the only policy capable of saving European countries from their divisions. Military problems in Europe, he said, had arisen sooner than France would have wished. She would have liked first to build the economic and political basis before tackling the military structure.

The military problem is with us in 1957 in as acute a form as ever, but it no longer has a direct effect on European integration. The arguments for this are now different, and, though cogent, they make less impact on men's minds. A Europe based on fear would have been much easier to achieve than the Europe we are now forced to construct. It would also, no doubt, have been less durable. The economists assure us that there are solid advantages to be derived from the creation of an economic bloc of some two

hundred and forty million people. The businessmen, in some at least of the countries concerned, have hesitantly accepted this doctrine as a general rule of policy. Many of them are considerably less anxious, however, to accept it in so far as it applies to themselves personally. There is nothing surprising or even reprehensible about their attitude. When the argument for Europe is put on the plane of material advantage it will be judged by material criteria. Men will willingly make sacrifices to ensure survival but will not so willingly make them to inflate their neighbours' bank balances.

Besides the argument from the common good there is 'the European thing' to be considered. Most Europeans are aware of a special heritage marking them off from the peoples of other continents. Once one attempts, however, to give practical expression to this feeling the difficulties multiply. That great trio of Europeans—Schuman, de Gasperi and Adenauer—were often accused of looking back with nostalgia to the time of Charlemagne. For instance, M. Jules Moch, now French representative on the United Nations Disarmament Sub-Committee, was highly critical of the Schuman Plan on this score. It involved serious risks, he maintained, and three conditions were necessary for the participation of the French. France should not be left face to face with Germany; there should be nationalization of all the French and Germans concerns involved to avoid the establishment '*with the support of Catholic governments devoted to economic liberalism* of a purely privately controlled international trust', and safeguards against German re-armament. Such fears were widespread throughout the French Socialist Party and meant in practice that whereas the Socialists were perfectly prepared to see a Europe based on the tenets of their own particular sect, they did not at all want one that looked back to its past or took account of its great heritage. 'L'Europe-Vatican' was their great bogey. Catholics themselves were less narrow in their attitude. M. Bidault, for one, declared during a debate on the European Movement in the National Assembly that if the aim was to create a Socialist or a Christian Democratic Europe there would be no Europe at all. 'We want a united Europe,' he emphasized.

This brings us to consider the place occupied by Catholics in the European Movement in France. We might have expected that their sense of unity transcending national borders and recognition of the considerable portion of truth in Belloc's oft-quoted

'Europe is the faith' would have engendered some enthusiasm. In fact, it is difficult to discern any in the pre-war years and easy to ascribe reasons for the apathy. Such a movement was against the whole post-revolutionary tradition of French Catholics. Historical developments had tended to throw them into the extreme nationalist camp, and though the 1914-18 war brought many changes of attitude in all sections of French life, it did not prevent the Action Française from being a considerable temptation—an indication of the climate that still prevailed.

Again, the character of some of the enthusiasts for European integration must have tended to restrain any Catholic initiative. Briand himself, for example, did not become Minister of Public Instruction and Worship in Clemenceau's administration because of an assiduous attendance at Mass. Among anti-clericals he later passed for something of a moderate—but hardly moderate enough from a Catholic point of view. Herriot managed to steer clear of any taint of clericalism all his life and it was a pleasant surprise to find him submitting his body to the Church at the end. We must hope this was the sign that he died fully reconciled.

There were others whose keen interest in the European Movement at this time was not calculated to attract Catholics. One was Pierre Cot, and another was Léon Blum. Blum indeed criticized the Briand proposals for their timidity. A federation without specific surrender of sovereignty he considered, reasonably enough, to be a contradiction in terms.

Catholics could thus hardly be expected to have found themselves at ease in this particular galley in the years between the two world wars. By 1945, however, the whole history of the collaboration and of the resistance had made a survival of the ghetto complex particularly anachronistic. If Socialists still tended to be suspicious of Catholic intentions in Europe, there was plenty of good will on the Catholic side even beyond the left wing. Where it broke down was not in the general field of domestic and foreign politics but on the vexed question of schools. This led to the flare-up of an anti-clericalism that had seemed ripe for burial in the period immediately after the last war. The blame for the renewed bitterness was not exclusively on the Socialist side.

In the meantime, the emergence of the Christian Democrats in Germany and Italy and the success of the M.R.P. had brought the whole European question into a vastly different perspective. The Europe to which it was now possible to look forward would

not be exclusively Catholic. There was no question of being able to say with Roland, 'les Chrétiens ont raison, les aïens ont tort'. Nevertheless, the influences that had given Europe all the unity it ever had were once more coming into their own and could not henceforth be entirely excluded from the political scene.

There was another factor particularly important for French Catholics. Some means had to be found of dealing with their understandable fear of the Germans, based on the bitter years of the occupation and a considerable contribution through the resistance movement to the population of the concentration camps. One solution might have been a renewal of the kind of preventive cold war that had failed in the inter-war years, but the more acceptable solution, morally and practically, was the one attempted—to link France and Germany so closely together inside a larger unity that there could be no question of their breaking free and attempting once more to exterminate each other.

The effort towards European unity on the political front coincided with private attempts, less publicized but perhaps in the long run no less important, to repair a friendship shattered by so many years of hostility. Practising Catholics were not by any means alone in this work, but they can perhaps claim to have been to the fore. We now know, of course, that the enduring fears of those years were unrealistic, at least in so far as they related to Germany alone. Even if Germany were once again to suffer the old temptations, she could yield to them only by selling her soul to Communism. Any further attack on France would be as Russia's tool and in furtherance of what was basically a Russian aggression. The danger from across the Rhine was not the propensities of the mythical 'eternal German' but an entirely new situation.

Recognition of this point has changed the basis of the European Movement in France. It has paved the way for the organic growth of a Europe that will eventually be federal. Earlier, the apparent need to contain Germany had made Frenchmen impatient of any such gradual solutions. Now it is a commonplace of French comment that the logical result of the common market and Euratom treaties is a united states of Western Europe which will, however, take some time to build. The treaties themselves are signed and will be coming before some at least of the national parliaments before these lines appear in print. They are technical documents and are intended to produce certain results

in the economic field, but indirectly they will have important political effects. The free movement of capital and labour between the countries and the gradual extension of common interests will, for instance, do much to break down barriers which did not exist when Europe was united in one Faith.

This is of course looking into the future, but the vision is fairly secure. No one can say at the moment how long it will take for the European common market to achieve its full promise as the foundation stone of a wider unity, but there is little fear that it will share the fate of the European Defence Community. It must be admitted, however, that it is in France that it has come up against the biggest obstacles. The diplomats of the other five Messina powers were confident, earlier this year, that if they could succeed there they would do so everywhere.

The present mood in France is entirely different from the enthusiasm of the immediate post-war years when a federal Europe seemed just round the corner. It is the Cartesian side of the French character that has now prevailed and much of the ample treatment of the common market in the French press has been extremely analytical. The pundits have gleefully pointed out contradictions and written articles which for a good part of their length seem thoroughly hostile. Then one suddenly discovers that the writer is not a professed enemy of the common market after all. He is merely indulging in the brutal French game of playing with ideas.

Frenchmen have themselves pilloried this tendency. The academician and former High Commissioner in Germany, André François-Poncet, dealt with it trenchantly in a recent article in *Le Figaro*. Speaking of forces hostile to the common market, he wrote:

Their propaganda is dangerous. It is conducted in fact by men who do not openly attack the European idea but who on the contrary, while proclaiming themselves its fervent supporters, take advantage of this status to oppose all practical manifestations of it on the grounds that they are defective or insufficient. They love the name and reject what it represents. They want Europe but on condition that it remains empty. One thinks, when listening to them, of the reply of the Abbé Mugnier to a woman penitent who asked him whether hell existed. 'Yes my child,' declared the worthy priest, 'Hell exists but I can assure you there is nobody in it.'

In his recent book, *De la III^e à la IV^e République*, M. André Siegfried makes a pertinent suggestion in this context. He pre-

icates a kind of schizophrenia in his fellow countrymen. As a private citizen the Frenchman's attitude, he suggests, is down to earth and practical, but as a member of a political community he thinks and acts in terms of abstract principle.

This would go a good way to explain many of the criticisms of the common market, but we must avoid over-simplification. It is fortunate that the Messina proposals have come at the end and not at the beginning of the effort to reach integration, for they demand a great act of faith for which the promptings come not from the heart but from the will. There are few emotions that can be mobilized in their defence. All the proposals seem on the surface to offer France is the bleak prospect of economic competition with a more powerful neighbour. We have heard a great deal about the weaknesses of the French economy in the last few months, and the hard bargaining of the French negotiators in the Brussels discussions on the common market has helped to call attention to them. They can, however, easily be exaggerated, particularly if we leave out of account the immense strides made since the war. The French economy is in fact very patchy and future prospects can be judged far better from the moral factors than from any statistics of trade.

Before the war France was a rapidly ageing nation and this had more to do with the collapse in 1940 than many people realize. Whatever the moral climate had been from 1918 onwards, France would have succumbed to the German military machine as Britain would also have done if she had met it head on. But the collapse would have taken a very different form if France had not been cursed by neo-malthusianism.

That scourge has now been arrested and this makes an enormous difference to the prospects of the European Movement. The Algerian tragedy has brought us face to face with some ugly manifestations of the frustration of French youth, but we should not let them blind us to a great improvement in the atmosphere between 1946 and 1957. Around Saint Germain-des-Prés today it is as though Jean-Paul Sartre had never existed. The girls have learnt to comb their hair and wash their faces, and if their brothers make considerable noise about being sent to North Africa they are in the main doing a good job when they get there. France is in fact gradually getting younger and more vigorous.

But the European common market is something that has to be dealt with *hic et nunc*. France will have to put her economic house

in order while the common market is being constructed. It is a measure of her confidence in her ability to do so that she has agreed to enter the market at all, and a measure of fears not entirely conjured that she has imposed such severe conditions. She is perhaps rightly doubtful about her chances of holding her own against German competition in anything but a fair struggle, and this has led her to an inspired improvisation—Eurafrica.

Germany's former enemies began early to realize the commercial advantages she would gain if she were *not* brought into the common defence effort. This did as much as anything to convert them to a belief in the necessity for a new German Army in one form or another, and the point was frankly recognized in the discussions with German representatives at the Petersberg in 1951 which were to have paved the way for the formation of a European Army.

A similar point was no less frankly recognized in the Brussels discussions on the common market. By losing her overseas territories after the first world war Germany, ironically enough, gained another advantage. Colonies are no longer respectable and, what is more important in the present context, they cost a great deal of money. Even assuming that the Algerian rebellion can be put down before the common market is translated from paper into a great European institution, France will have to continue for many years pouring money and resources into Africa. She has now secured the promise of help from her partners in the common market. This should deprive those countries without the burden of colonies themselves—and Germany is the chief—of an unfair advantage, but, it will not turn them into colonial powers.

The French have been much less ready than their British neighbours to liquidate their empire, but they do recognize that the time is coming when this must be done. M. Mollet's Government has recently made important concessions in what is generally referred to as 'Black Africa'.

The coincidence of a new attitude towards French overseas possessions and the need to overcome a major objection to the common market has provided the necessity which has given birth to the invention. Just as earlier the disinterestedness of French advocacy of a European Army and of integrated heavy industries was open to question, so now cynics may doubt whether Eurafrica is as noble an idea as it looks. But there are few men whose motives, even for their finest actions, will survive an impartial

scrutiny unscathed. Whatever led the French to devise Eurafica, it remains a great and creative idea. We have only to remember the lives of St Augustine and his mother to recognize what the links once were between European and African civilizations. Modern techniques have made it possible for us to push down beyond the great desert and it is only right that what was once the dark part of the Continent should now rejoin the north in assuming Africa's old place in the development of our culture. Europe needs Africa and Africa needs Europe. The prospects offered by the two in partnership seem limitless. The catastrophe that might arise from hostility between them is equally awe-inspiring.

Once again the French have produced a revolutionary idea, but as yet they are not enthusiastic enough about it themselves. What will happen to it is one of the most crucial questions of the present day.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE IN FRENCH EDUCATION

A Dual System

By VERNON MALLINSON

THE authority wielded by the Church in France in the seventeenth century was geared to enhancing the splendour and glory of the country and of absolute monarchical rule based on a solid bourgeoisie that received its education from the Church. It was an alliance between Church and State for the greater glory of France. The Jesuits, loyally and most competently, carried out their self-appointed task of establishing an educational pattern and succeeded in giving to France its ideal type of bourgeois, the type the age felt it needed and the type the France of today still feels it needs: a highly intelligent, rational and logically minded bourgeoisie that should be the mainstay of centralized control.

The principle of centralization of education under rigid State control was first enunciated by La Chalotais in 1763, upheld by the writers of the French Revolution, and cast in its final practical mould by Napoleon in 1808. 'There will be no fixed political State if there is no teaching body with fixed principles,' he is quoted as saying. And in determining the present pattern of French secondary education he quite consciously imitated many of the features of the organization of the Society of Jesus that had done so much in the past to create an intellectual *élite*. As he himself put it, he was anxious to secure for the State all the advantages that were obviously secured for the Church of Rome by the Jesuit organization, and to secure a class of civil servant who would have no other ambition except to be useful, and no other interest except

public welfare. 'My aim in establishing an educational corporation is to be able to direct political and moral opinions.'

The destruction of the Church control of education by the Revolution and the introduction of Napoleon's highly centralized system of administration that none the less eventually recognized the Church and the Church's influence led to the nineteenth-century struggle between Church and State. The *Loi Falloux* of 1850 in essentials resolved this by killing the State monopoly in education and allowing the Church or any other duly qualified organization or person to open private secondary schools. A further law of 1886 recognized officially the existence of the 'free' primary school and conveniently defined such a school as being a place where at least three children of two different families are gathered together for instruction, at least one of the courses of instruction offered being on the official State curriculum for primary schools. Still another law of 1875 had legalized private institutions of higher (i.e. university level) education. And finally, in 1919, private technical schools were also recognized.

As the law controlling the provision of non-State education now stands, anyone has the right to open a school at any level provided certain guarantees of a minimum efficiency are given. Thus, whilst the State is not interested in teaching methods and procedure in these schools, it must ensure that the disposition of buildings, classroom space, dormitory space, lavatories, etc., are in conformity with the requirements in State schools; that the teaching in no way aims at undermining the Constitution or is against the moral law; that headmasters of secondary schools, in addition to possessing some minimum recognized State qualification (*bachelier*), must also have taught for a minimum period of five years in either a State or private secondary school: and that both headmaster and teaching staff in technical schools must hold the necessary technical diplomas for their various specialities. Private teaching establishments have the right to grant whatever diplomas and certificates of competency they wish, but these private diplomas and examinations have no official value from the point of view of the State and will not secure for the holder a public State appointment. In actual practice, exceptions are made for certain kinds of diploma of a technical nature. The intention is clear. The principle of centralization of educational administration aims at maintaining a high uniformity of standards throughout the country. Private schools in theory may organize their

curricula as they wish, but in practice—since possession of one or other of the various kinds of State *baccalauréats* in existence is a pre-requisite in the career of any young student—all private secondary schools must work towards this examination and be staffed with teachers who are really competent in their specialist subjects. Thus, despite complete acceptance of the voluntary principle in education, at the secondary level at any rate the State has seen to it that there will be a high uniformity of standards and achievement and a more or less common curriculum throughout the country.

Nor is this necessarily a bad thing, particularly when a country is vowed to the principle of the training of an academic *élite*, and particularly when it is remembered that there are close on 1700 'free' secondary schools in the country as opposed to 910 State secondary schools. The 'free' schools have a total population of 341,000 pupils, in round figures, as opposed to a total of 456,000 in State secondary education.¹ Apart from a very few Protestant, Jewish, and experimental schools all these schools are Church schools. Naturally, they vary considerably in size, in competence and in importance, but this lack of uniformity, allied to a wide diversity in pupil intake, proves ultimately a blessing in disguise. They have to experiment in teaching techniques. They have to study much more closely the temperament and abilities of their pupils than must their colleagues in the State *lycées*. And there is a serious attempt made to fit the teaching to the pupil rather than the pupil to the teaching. In this sense the State *lycée* teacher is still far too concerned with the purely academic side of his work and too little with pupil relationships. The idea springs, of course, from the persistence of the dichotomy between *instruction* and *éducation*: from the point of view of the State the former is the sole responsibility of the school, the latter the responsibility of parents. The very nature of the priest's vocation causes him to occupy himself with both and thus to adopt an attitude towards the whole complicated process of education that has many points of similarity with what is done in the English public- and boarding-school system. Incidentally, it would seem that just as boys' boarding-schools in England tend to be more successful than girls' schools in enriching a pupil's life in this way, so do private schools in France that are managed by men rather than by women. To the

¹ Figures supplied by the French Ministry of Education for the academic year 1951-2. There is no reason to suppose that any marked change has since taken place.

outside (and perhaps not impartial) observer, girls' schools in France run by women's religious orders have still too much of a claustrophobic atmosphere about them. Finally, it should be remembered that the general academic level of pupils in Church secondary schools throughout France is lower than that to be found in the State *lycée* or *collège*. The same may be said in general terms of the English boarding-school system. It is to be remembered, however, that in France the State pursues a policy of almost ruthless elimination of those elements in its secondary-school system that fail to stand the academic drive and pace.

We have already noted in passing that in France, as in England, no teacher in the private secondary-school system need possess any academic qualification of any kind. In practice, of course, the vast majority of teachers are academically suitably qualified, though a number of men and women will be found in such schools (lay teachers or members of a religious Order) who could never qualify to meet the rigorous standards exacted to teach in a *lycée*.

It was in 1875 that 'free' instruction at a university level was first permitted. A further law of 1880 fixed the present pattern. To be entitled to rank as *une faculté libre* a higher teaching establishment must carry on its teaching staff no fewer persons holding a recognized doctor's degree than are to be found in the smallest parallel State faculty. Thus, there can exist 'free' faculties of letters, of law, of science, of medicine, etc. Three such recognized faculties grouped together hold the title of *université libre*. There are Catholic faculties at Lille, Lyon, Angers, Toulouse, and Paris. Students within the 'free' university system must present themselves for examination before the appropriate State Faculty, or before a special jury composed of members of their own teaching staff and of the appropriate State Faculty. Thus, as with the *baccalauréat*, the State makes certain that there is a uniform high level of achievement in all university faculties. In these circumstances there is no particular material or intellectual advantage to be gained by the vast majority of ordinary Catholic students through attendance at the 'free' university rather than at a recognized State establishment. In consequence, out of 25,000 registered university students only about 9000 are in attendance at 'free' faculties.

As the Society of Jesus was responsible for determining the general pattern French secondary education was to follow, so was the Church (in a sense even more profoundly) concerned with

education at a primary level. It was a French priest, Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, who first attempted in 1684 to provide a systematic course of primary instruction for the poor. Much later, Napoleon acknowledged the wisdom of this. 'Les Evêques et les Curés,' he said, 'sont les surveillants naturels des écoles destinées au peuple.' During the reigns of Napoleon, of Louis XVIII, and of Charles X, various teaching orders were recognized as competent in this field, and it was not until after the revolution of 1830 that the State itself awoke to what it considered its responsibilities for an organized system of State-controlled primary education. Many stormy battles followed, and eventually in 1886 'free' primary schools were given their present legal status. The latest figures available show that there are now 11,051 'free' primary schools with a total of 937,998 pupils as opposed to 73,893 State primary schools comprising 4,485,357 pupils.¹ For all practical purposes it can be taken that all these children in the 'free' schools are in Catholic 'free' schools.

The situation is by no means as healthy as in the 'free' secondary-school system. There has been a marked decline in numbers attending the Catholic primary school since 1886, and various reasons for this can be adduced. In the first place, parents themselves have not thought it as important at the primary level (which concerns itself almost exclusively with the three R's) to have a complete Catholic background, it being remembered that no religious instruction of any kind takes place in any State school. Secondly, State primary schools are to be found almost on every parent's doorstep. Thirdly, the various political troubles at the turn of the present century, resulting in the law of 1904 which aimed at the suppression of all teaching congregations within ten years (never fully implemented because of the outbreak of the 1914-18 war), seriously affected the steady growth and development of the Catholic primary-school system. It has never since fully recovered, and, ironically enough, the very courageous and praiseworthy work that the Church undertook during the period of the Vichy *régime* and of German occupation, to keep the spirit of France alive amongst the young, has been turned by its adversaries to its discredit. The Vichy *régime* was generous with subsidies to keep the good work going. Generous, that is, in comparison with what had been done in the past. It was not unreasonable

¹ Figures supplied by the French Ministry of Education for the academic year 1951-2.

on the part of the Church to assume that after the liberation of France, and particularly in view of the new ideas for a radical reform of the whole French educational system, the treatment now meted out could not be less generous than under the Vichy *régime*. This unhappily has not proved the case, and the Church works constantly under an unfair financial burden that becomes even more crippling because of the greater expense involved in modernizing the whole approach to teaching in keeping with the spirit of the new reforms that have actually been put into practice at both the primary and secondary levels. As I write this, President Coty is paying an official visit to the Pope. It would be a fine gesture for these troubled times, which demand complete concord and harmony both within and without the democracies of Western Europe, if his return to France could be expeditiously followed by an announcement that the salaries of teachers in Catholic and other 'free' schools that are officially approved will henceforth be met by the State, as they are in England and to some extent in Belgium.

For as the record of the Church's work in secondary and higher education can compare favourably with that of the State, so can the achievements of the Church primary schools and training colleges for primary teachers also stand the test. Educationists within the Church have given and were giving during the war years just as much careful thought to the desirability of post-war reforms in education as others who were later called upon to popularize the work of the Langevin Commission on school reform. The Church was fully alive to the new ferment in ideas on educational techniques and procedures and was quietly experimenting to find out what best accorded with the French national character and aspirations. And its whole approach has been much more supple than that of the State can ever be because of the lack of a corresponding rigid centralization. Teacher training by the Church is only loosely based on diocesan direction, and in any case methods and approaches can and do vary considerably from diocese to diocese.

Primary-school teachers trained by the Church receive an appropriate qualifying certificate and may also sit for the State primary teachers' qualifying examination. Their expenses during training must be borne, however, either by their parents or through scholarships awarded by the diocesan director of private schools. Such scholarship holders are obliged to sign a contract

with the diocese pledging themselves to serve for a number of years in Church schools. Young men and women who, for one reason or another, cannot take a full-time course of training are allowed to act for a time as unqualified teachers, but are placed in charge of experienced head teachers and expected to follow part-time training under the supervision of the diocesan inspectors and director of education. Further, all primary teachers are constantly encouraged to keep themselves abreast of new developments and to improve their general culture by attendance at holiday training courses and by further study during their spare time at one or other of the pedagogical institutes attached to the five Catholic faculties in Paris, Lyons, Lille, Angers, and Toulouse. The State university faculties are only just beginning to think in terms of pedagogical institutes!

Similarly, the well-publicized State *Musée Pédagogique et Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique* has its Catholic counterpart in the *Centre d'Etudes Pédagogiques*, which not only deals in solid research and international documentation but also publishes a monthly review (*Education*), has its own primary teachers' training college and demonstration school, and organizes courses for both secondary- and primary-school teachers. As early as 1946, publications from this educational research centre betrayed how keenly alive the Church was to problems that needed an immediate practical solution. Much attention has since been paid to questions of method and procedure in the teaching of classics, modern languages, mathematics, history, French, geography—and also to the importance of religious instruction in what I might term this present age of religious defeatism. Parent-teacher associations have been strengthened. Enquiries into home life and parental attitudes have proved extremely revealing. Systems of education in other European countries have been carefully and sympathetically observed and appraised. And quite recently a group of distinguished Catholic educators has set itself the task of instituting an objective and penetrating enquiry into just where all the newer educational techniques are leading. Their book has been published by the *Presses Universitaires de France* and bears the significant title of *Progrès et Incertitudes de l'Education Nouvelle*. It deserves a much wider public than it is likely to obtain in its present French edition, and I could wish that some Catholic publishing house would tackle the responsibility of securing a translation into English.

There is little more that can be fruitfully said in the scope offered by an article of this length. I have tried to show both indirectly and by concrete example how strong is the Catholic tradition in France, and how the cultural concepts of the whole nation stem directly from it. To attempt to deny this tradition or to belittle its effect when the mass of the people are fundamentally Catholic in outlook, if not necessarily deeply and fervently religious, is foolish. Admittedly, there is much to criticize from the point of view of standards of intellectual attainment in many Catholic schools. But intellectual attainment is not everything. In any case, the State has a monopolistic control of all examinations that give access to appointments of all kinds in public affairs. The 'free' schools have to conform. And the 'free' schools, despite increasing and crippling financial burdens, are very much to the fore in all matters of educational reform. Surely the time has come for a country which justly prides itself on its democratic spirit and liberal tradition to guarantee at least the salaries of properly accredited teachers in these schools.

FRANCE AND THE REVOLUTION

The Abiding Cleavage

By SIR JOHN McEWEN

THE effects of the Revolution of 1789 on the world at large, and upon France in particular, were many and various. So far as France was concerned, what it did was to create a gulf between Right and Left which up to the present day has proved to be unbridgeable; as M. Raymond Aron puts it: 'It is the great Revolution which not only divides our history, but the nation, in two, and perhaps still does so today.' This fatal abyss, which from the beginning, owing to the shedding of French blood, was impassable enough, was further widened by the fact of one side, having been forced to emigrate, being thereafter dependent upon foreign aid to enable it to return. As one of the Deputies, speaking in the Chamber in April 1815, put it: 'Il faut être sincère; il y a deux partis en France: celui de la France; celui de l'étranger.' It is, therefore, to the task of bridging this gulf that every government in France for the past hundred and fifty years has necessarily bent its energies. And so far without success.

It is this that has to be borne in mind when we set out to criticize the apparent shortcomings of the French parliamentary system. We with our two carefully balanced parties and system of more or less regular ins and outs, and with little anxiety lest the pendulum swing too far one way or the other, can afford to take our politics easily. Not so the French. For with them it is not the fate of a party which is at stake—parties count for very little—but the fate of the regime.

But, having determined the existence of the sundering breach in the body politic of France, it is not without interest to see how during the following century and a half the various rulers of that country attempted to heal it.

The first was Napoleon. In some ways his was an easier task

than his successors' was to be. There had as yet been no counter-revolution and to that extent feelings were less exacerbated than they were later to become. Furthermore his origins were not suspect, for though no revolutionary himself, he had served the Revolution as a soldier. But in the eyes of the nation, as he well knew, he was looked upon as being the direct heir of that Revolution. This proved to be at once a handicap and a source of strength. It was a source of strength to him in the beginning when he made use of the powerful currents of revolutionary energy to gain his ends; later, as the Imperial idea solidified, it became an increasing embarrassment. During the first eleven years of his reign, that is up to the abdication in 1814, Napoleon's efforts were directed towards weaning his countrymen away from the ideals of 1789. In this he was remarkably successful, building up a strictly hierarchical society, the very antithesis of the revolutionary ideal, amid the plaudits of those who, had their eyes not been dazzled by his genius, would have been the first to cry out against it. That dazzlement has continued to affect every Bonapartist from that day to this and has enabled them to hail as the representative of the Revolution the very man whose hope was to destroy it. When at a later date Béranger, in a well-known poem, recalled with pride the sight of the Emperor riding through the village 'suivi de rois' his vision was still that of a republican of year I of the Revolution. The kings that he saw riding behind his idol were, to him, the captives of his bow and spear; the fact that they were merely paying homage to the greatest among them was blindly or conveniently ignored.

So much then for the Left. With the Right he was less concerned. He did however make it clear that he would welcome the *émigrés*, that is the old nobility, back. But with very few exceptions they preferred to remain aloof and in exile, proudly affirming their loyalty to their lawful sovereign. The Emperor saw that there was nothing to be gained by blandishments and therefore, while leaving the door open, turned his attention elsewhere. Such, however, was his prestige at the height of his power that, had that phase lasted longer, it is possible to conceive even these two extremes being forced to live together in peace under that iron hand.

In 1814 came the abdication, the occupation of Paris by the Allies, and the return with them of Louis XVIII and the *émigrés*. That the King's brother, the Comte d'Artois, should elect to return dressed in English uniform showed at the very outset how

hopelessly out of touch the Royal Family was with national feeling. So did the King signing his decrees 'in the eighteenth year of my reign', as if the Republic, Consulate, and Empire had never been, cause further offence. To list the various ways in which the King's government succeeded in less than a year in reducing the enthusiasm of the nation from, as one observer remarked, a fire to a spark would be unprofitable. Let it suffice to say that no means were neglected, from the banning of the tricolour and the regimental eagles on the one hand, to insulting the marshals and their wives at Court on the other (when the Duchesse d'Abrantés, the wife of Marshal Junot, Duc d'Abrantés, was presented to the Duchesse d'Angoulême all that the latter Princess said was: 'Ah; c'est Madame Junot!'). But, in fairness be it said, there was no active persecution of opponents, and a charter, comprising considerable concessions to Liberal opinion, was conceded. This last certainly gave some measure of satisfaction to the Liberal-minded and doubtless would have given still more had the real issue at stake been political or civil liberty. But it was not. The rallying cry of the opposition as it now began to make itself heard was not *Vive la Liberté*, but *Vive l'Empereur*. Even had it been possible for the King to make further concessions to Liberal opinion, and the three elements which formed the very foundations of the throne—the Church, the Nobility, and the Chouans—made it quite impossible, it would have availed him nothing; for people no longer wanted measures, but a man. And in any case it was too late. On 1 March the Emperor landed at Antibes and three weeks later he was in the Tuileries. To all outward appearances it was as if the past nine months had never been. Much, however, as Napoleon quickly discovered, had changed in that short time. But first of all the problem was to get there, and to this end he drew up the two famous proclamations. One was addressed to the people: 'Français!' it ran, 'j'ai entendu dans mon exil vos plaintes et vos vœux. . . . J'arrive reprendre mes droits qui sont les vôtres.' The other was addressed to the Army: 'Soldats! . . . La victoire marchera au pas de charge. L'aigle, avec les couleurs nationales, volera de clocher en clocher jusqu'aux tours de Notre Dame.' A few days later when this latter proclamation fell into the hands of the unfortunate Marshal Ney, he, with a groan, was heard to say: 'Why can't *they* write like that? That's the way to speak to soldiers.'

Now it is clear that Napoleon on returning from Elba hoped to resume the Imperial sway just as it had been before, and with

himself in possession of the full powers which he had renounced at the abdication. He realized also that it would be necessary at the beginning, in order to obtain the required impetus of popular support to carry him to the seat of power, to play the old revolutionary card. To this end he always appeared, on his way to Paris, with the tricolour cockade on his hat and began his proclamations with the long-disused appellation: 'Citoyens'. On the other hand in his contacts with the Army it was as the Emperor that he presented himself and to the glories of the Empire alone that he appealed. But once back in Paris he found it more difficult than he had expected to resume the former Imperial autocracy. Something of the old magic attaching to his name was lacking. His orders, and they were as incisive and as multitudinous as ever, were no longer carried out as they once had been. A large number of leading officials in the provinces were Royalists; the Vendée and Brittany were up in arms against him. Moreover some concession in the direction of popular government to replace the Charter was imperative. This last was a bitter pill to swallow, for not only was he possessed of an inherent dislike and distrust of democratic methods of government, but time was infinitely precious. Already the armed forces of all Europe and Russia were massing along the frontiers. He had to re-form and build up his own forces, weakened and demoralized by successive political purges as they were, reconstitute everything from the commissariat to the general staff, and plan a campaign. Such was his task; and, moreover, it had to be completed in a few weeks. He can hardly be blamed if he undertook the added burden of working out a constitution at such a moment with some impatience. But work it out he did on the basis of Benjamin Constant's ideas, which in their turn derived from the English system. The new constitution even went so far in the English direction as to provide for a second chamber composed of hereditary peers. The Emperor, knowing his countrymen's love of *égalité* before all else, and fearing lest it cause trouble, agreed to this provision reluctantly. He was quite right. This was the point generally singled out for criticism. The *Acte Additionel* as it was called (additional, that is, to the Imperial constitution already promulgated, and deliberately so-called in order to avoid any semblance of competition with the now defunct Royalist Charter of a few weeks earlier) came into force in May 1815, and the Emperor's barely suppressed rage when he spoke at the opening of the new assembly was remarked upon by many.

Thereafter a bare six weeks were to elapse before Waterloo, the collapse of the Empire, and the return of the Monarchy.

The Napoleonic attempt probably came as near as any to bridging the revolutionary gulf. But it was an individual attempt by a man of genius with all the backing of military prestige; and it was too much to hope that when the master's hand was withdrawn it could continue. Nor did it. Instead, there was a tragic widening of the fatal gulf.

For the persecution that followed, Louis XVIII cannot be altogether blamed. He was too intelligent a man to be cruel, and too lazy to be vindictive. But the conflict of loyalties had been both sharp and recent, and it was not possible to control the fury of those who had not only been lately dispossessed but also badly frightened. The return of the Bourbons was, therefore, marred by a period of repression which, however inaccurately, was for a long time to come to be pointed to by the Left as a parallel crime to the September Massacres of 1792. If, however, there was one episode more than another which underlined the tragic opposition in French opinion at that time it was the dukedom awarded by the King to Wellington for his victory over the French at Waterloo. For the rest of Louis XVIII's reign, and until July 1830 when the departure of Charles X once more left the throne vacant, the gulf remained unbridged and such peace as there was between the opposing sides was due more to exhaustion than to statesmanship.

The period between 1830 and 1848 saw France's first experiment in constitutional monarchy, under Louis-Philippe. Now, on the face of it, here seemed to be the best chance since the fall of Napoleon of reconciling the various hostile elements in the country. The new King was known to be Liberal in his views and moderate in outlook. Being the son of Egalité d'Orléans and having fought on the national side at Valmy he could claim some affinity with the men of 1789 and their successors; as the Duc d'Orléans and a Prince of the Blood Royal he could hope for sympathy and support from the Right; as a good husband and father with an exemplary wife and large family he might be expected to appeal to the Church and *bourgeois* opinion in general. Apart from being highly intelligent he had known many countries and understood European politics. He had a particular liking for England and would read *The Times* first thing every morning just like any English gentleman in his club. And finally he was ready and anxious to make concessions. For instance, in

order to emphasize the constitutional as opposed to the absolutist side of his kingship he would forgo any coronation ceremony and call himself King of the French instead of King of France like all his predecessors back to St Louis (but Napoleon, it will be remembered, was Emperor 'of the French'). In the matter of the national flag which had already caused and was yet to cause so much trouble he welcomed the tricolour without hesitation. The only section of public opinion—and it was a vitally important one—which as yet he was unable to conciliate, having no bargaining counters, was the Bonapartist. He made up for this later, however, by bringing back the Emperor's body with stately ceremony to its final resting-place in the Invalides. Such was the new King—agreeable, of a generous and forgiving nature, a lover of his country, anxious above all to heal the breaches of the past, probably the most highly intelligent and certainly the bravest man who ever ruled over the destinies of France. Here then was the man, here the system, that were capable of welding the country together again. But what happened was the very opposite. 'No other French sovereign has been so criticized, scoffed at, abused, blackguarded, threatened and openly attacked by assassins as Louis-Philippe.'¹ From the first day of his reign to the last, for eighteen years, and with unwavering courage, he stood up to this rising tide of spite and hatred until at last it overwhelmed him and he left France, an old and broken man. The legitimist Right, the *Ultras* as they were called, hated him because he was Philippe Egalités' son and was therefore, in their eyes, identified with the Revolution; the Revolutionaries hated him because of his royal blood and because in assuming the status of a king he had forestalled the return of the Republic; the Church disliked him as an eighteenth-century sceptic, while the Bonapartists despised him for comparing unfavourably with Napoleon. The result was that although he had to hand all the means whereby a general reconciliation could be effected, in the face of the circumstances of the time he could do nothing. It is not without irony that almost the only visible monument to his name in Paris today is the monolith which stands in the middle of that square which bears the name of Concord.

The fact also that Louis-Philippe came to the throne as the result of a revolution fatally weakened his position thereafter; but in any case he came too soon. He was at least a century before his time.

¹ Jules Bertant, *Le Roi Bourgeois*.

The revolution of 1848, which had been based on even slenderer grounds of necessity than most, was followed by the four inglorious years of the Second Republic. Men of letters seldom make good politicians, and the spectacle of such men as Lamartine and Victor Hugo, by striking heroic attitudes and repeating the outworn slogans of 1789, stirring up popular feelings which they were then quite incapable of controlling is not an inspiring one. In 1852 Louis Napoleon, who was then President, by the *coup d'état* of 2 December, overturned the Republic and the second Napoleonic Empire had begun.

Napoleon III's chances of bridging the great national divide were, at best, limited. In the first place he suffered from the same grave initial disability as his predecessor Louis-Philippe—he acceded to power as the result of a revolution. It is true that it was a very minor affair which has been ever since grossly magnified to his detriment by his enemies. But it overthrew the Republic and for that the Republicans never forgave him. On the Right, in addition to the Ultras, the old enemies of Bonapartism, he also now had to reckon with the Orleanists. He could count on the traditional support of the Army for a certain length of time at any rate; but it was questionable how long enthusiasm based on an inherited magic only would last without being strengthened by proof of the magician's powers. To others in whose minds similar speculations might arise he addressed the would-be sedative but slightly unconvincing slogan: 'L'Empire c'est la paix.' As distinct from the extreme Left, Liberal opinion was hostile to the regime from the start chiefly on account of the *coup d'état* but also, as the reign went on, because of the police system which was an inherent element in the imperial form of government, and the censorship imposed on the Press. This was resented the more since to the younger generation it was a novelty. Especially during its earlier years the Second Empire was never sufficiently sure of itself to allow public criticism the latitude it had enjoyed, and abused, under Louis-Philippe. 'Although,' to quote one well-known authority,¹ 'no regime more than the Second Empire had muffled the ordinary organs of public opinion, no ruler more than Louis Napoleon was quick to catch the faintest nuance of popular censure or approbation. He did not allow men to shout, but he was far from being deaf.'

In 1871 it was the politicians in Paris, taking advantage of the

¹ F. A. Simpson, *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France*.

defeat of the Army in the field, who brought the Empire down. And just as the increasing Liberalism of Napoleon III in 1869 had features in common with his uncle's steps in the same direction during the Hundred Days, so the situation arising after the fall of the Second Empire was not so unlike that which presented itself after the fall of its predecessor as might at first sight appear. There was a discredited Emperor in captivity, the Empress and the heir abroad, a provisional government in Paris, and a *de jure* King, in this case the Comte de Chambord, in exile ready to take over. The advent of the Commune in Paris, following on the horrors of the siege, if anything increased the chances of a royalist restoration, partly owing to the revulsion of feeling against the murderous excesses of the Communards, and partly owing to a no less serious fall from public esteem suffered by the Republicans because of the drastic methods they had to employ to suppress those who were guilty of committing those same excesses. Moreover, at the head of the Republic was MacMahon, Marshal of France and Duke of Magenta, a known monarchist. The way seemed clear, therefore, for the return of the representative of the elder royal line. Grievous was the shock to his supporters, and profound the satisfaction of the Left, when it became known that the Comte de Chambord was not prepared to accept the three colours as the national flag. Thus strangely did the Third Republic come into being—the form of government, as Thiers pessimistically remarked, that divided the country least.

It is not possible in the scope of this article to do more than glance at the political history of France during the subsequent eighty years. But certain events may be looked at as evidence of the continued existence of the unbridged gulf dividing the country. The Boulanger incident was the first. Boulanger himself was merely a cat's-paw; if he held any opinions on any subject, which is doubtful, he never said what they were. But in the use made of him at different times by both Left and Right one gets a glimpse, as of something seen momentarily in the flare of a rocket on a dark night, of the ancient abyss. The second illuminating incident was Dreyfus. This was an altogether more serious matter. It was also a warning that certain volcanoes long thought to be extinct were still active, and that furnaces complacently regarded as having died out years before were yet red hot beneath their ashes, and were capable when a strong enough wind was blowing of blazing terrifyingly up again. In the end, politically speaking,

it was the Church and the Army that suffered most in public esteem, and with them the causes of Monarchy and Bonapartism of which they were held severally to be the traditional adherents.

Following after the fiasco of March 1936, as war more and more took on an aspect of inevitability, the fatal weakness at the heart of France began to manifest itself for all who had eyes to see. The surface veneer began to crack, revealing the far more horrifying fissure below. To most Frenchmen the invasion of the Rhineland came as a sudden awakening to reality, as a splash of icy water awakens a sleeper, not to the reality of their own unpreparedness—of which they were already subconsciously aware—but to the unpreparedness of their powerful neighbour, upon whom, equally subconsciously, their hope of salvation had rested. When, in the face of what to every Frenchman was a direct challenge, that neighbour shuffled and temporized and even then refused to bring in conscription, the internal fissure began to widen. While the Left grew increasingly truculent, the Right lost heart; a tired old man of eighty was the only hope remaining. Then came catastrophe as a result of which a subsidiary split developed. The Free France-Vichy split was not originally on the same lines as the old one: de Gaulle was every bit as much a man of the Right as Pétain. It was only as it were by accident that their paths, in the political sense, ended by diverging so widely. Not that there were not signs along the way for those who knew how to read them. For instance, when the General started to refer to his partisans as *'les purs'* the phrase had about it a familiar ring, and to many it came as a shock to realize that in fact it was an evocation—whether conscious or not, who is to say?—of the shade of Robespierre. One aspect at least of this lesser, but nevertheless crippling, division emerged in 1943 when de Gaulle and Giraud met at Algiers. Here for the first time representatives of the two sides found themselves, if not on speaking terms, at least on terms when they could speak to one another face to face if they chose. The result was not encouraging. “Un seul but, la victoire,” disait le brave et ingénu Giraud. “Un seul but, la conquête du pouvoir,” riposte la voix sombre de de Gaulle.¹

And in due course, on the familiarly insecure foundations, the Fourth Republic came into being.

But the ancient gulf remains; the problem which has baffled so many able Frenchmen over the last century and a half still

¹ Louis Rougier, *Les Accords Secrets*.

awaits solution. There are those, presumably the majority at the present time, who pin their hopes to the republican form for the same reason as M. Thiers long ago, because it is the least disruptive. It may be so; but it is a negative approach at best. Surely it is possible to conceive something more positive and invigorating than that. Could it be that the secret lies with the Bonapartists? It is tempting to think that it might. They are, after all, an organized body with a Prince of the family at their head; they have all the glories of the *Epopée* behind them as well as the shadow of the greatest of names. It would be a mistake to write the Napoleonic legend off as a worn-out thing. On the contrary, the old magic is still there. But, and for this Rostand is in some measure responsible, it has been transmogrified into poetry. Time was when it could pick a man up from an isle of the sea or a back street in London and, as it were upon the very wings of the morning, carry him to the imperial throne of France. But the end in both cases had been a bitter one. For the King of Rome was dead, and the Prince Imperial also; and now nothing remained but the legend, flowering yet from the oddly sundered tombs of Farnborough and the Invalides, a dream where in the bugles of Austerlitz mingle their once urgent summons with the horn of Roncevalles.

All else having failed there remains the Monarchy. Is it possible that this way lies salvation: that here is to be found the key to ultimate reconciliation? It is a question which many have been asking themselves in these latter days. The extinction of the elder line, that of Charles X, not only removes many a formidable obstacle from the path but bequeaths to the younger that mantle of legitimacy which, if only as an adornment, could well become the figure of a constitutional sovereign, while the character, sagacity, and known views of the present Comte de Paris are a sufficient guarantee to Bonapartists and Republicans alike that nothing gained by them in the field of human liberty would, under his auspices, be thrown away. It would not be fitting for a mere foreigner to do more than speculate on the possible course of events; time alone can show the issue. Nevertheless it may well be we shall yet see the day when, by the united will of all Frenchmen, a constitutional sovereign shall once more reign over a free people. And when that day comes we shall know that the perilous gulf has been bridged at last, and that France has once more, as so often in the past, renewed her youth.

THOUGHTS ON THE LOURDES CENTENARY

The Two Traditions

By D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

WHILE the Lodges are probably still shuddering and imprecating over the tomb of Édouard Herriot (and anybody who knew the France of the 1920s must have shared their astonishment), it is permissible to meditate, in the outer vestibule, so to speak, of Lourdes Centenary year, on the mystery of the French and our Lady's tenderness for that nation.

La Salette, Lourdes, Pontmain, in chronological order: the trilogy of momentous nineteenth-century happenings on French soil inevitably recalls that early passage in the *Divine Comedy* where the poet, lost and beset by evil on the fringe of the dark forest, receives Virgil's message of hope. 'There is a gentle Lady in Heaven so moved by pity that she breaks the stern judgment there on high . . .' Spiritually considered, France was in very Dantean plight at about the time of the apparitions at La Salette. The disciples of Saint-Simon, Fournier, and Proudhon, the Utopians, the demagogues, the first Marxists, the powerful Lodges, an infidel and dominating Sorbonne swayed large masses of the intelligentsia, the *bourgeoisie*, and an urban working-class still infected with the half-idealist, half-satanic *mystique* of the Revolution. Over considerable tracts of France dechristianized half a century before by the Jacobins the brutish indifference of the peasantry—except at Ars—to spiritual appeal of any kind was breaking young missionary hearts as it does, here and there, today. Machinery had come in to intensify social unrest, and the State was barely masking an hostility to the Church due later to flower in active persecution. Simultaneously survived, visibly growing and recovering lost territory, that deposit of a great Catholic past

which the revival of the 1880-90's was to expand into the formidable force in French national life it is nowadays, with its ever-recurrent surprises for foreigners resigned in advance to panegyrics of Sartre. Not long ago a seemingly typical young product of the Sorbonne, gay, cynical, careless, and uninhibited, was showing me the wilderness, once a sequence of formal terraced gardens by a pupil of Le Nôtre, surrounding the half-ruinous *monument historique* in which his family still contrives to live. We came to a clearing in the jungle. 'Here's where we say the Office on Good Friday afternoons,' he said casually, and resumed his satiric anecdote as we plunged on. He was in fact a convinced and ardent Catholic, as it turned out, and there are plenty of his kind in France today; but the surprise was comparable, relatively, to that conveyed by the surrender of a Bergson or a Herriot, not to speak of the strangely mild reaction of the Left to President Coty's recent audience of the Holy Father. The Gallic 'this-ness' is often unpredictable in its manifestations, as history amply records. Not among the least surprising of these, in a nation so often adjudged fundamentally frivolous and irreligious—was it not the self-appointed mission of the old *Quarterly Review* to strive censoriously to correct the Gaul's un-English morals year after year?—is the triumph of Lourdes.

By next year Lourdes will have withstood the fall of a dynasty, two world-wars, three German occupations, and a couple or more of hearty anti-Catholic offensives by the Third Republic, Herriot's included; not counting that intermittent carping of tongue and pen which will probably go on while the world lasts. The storm aroused by St Bernadette's revelations has never really died down. 'This profitable imposture!'—Dr Inge's cry has been raised in every generation since 1858, and there seems no reason why it should ever cease. Antagonism in 1958 can but repeat the formulae of precursors in the earliest days of the shrine: Dr Voison of the Faculty of Medicine for Paris, for instance ('that little pathological liar Soubirous'), and the worthy Lacade, mayor of Lourdes, so alert to exploit the tomfoolery of the 'miraculous' spring that he had thousands of labels printed and ready when the first chemical analysis of what was to be the world-famous *Eau Lacade* shattered his dreams of bottling-factories, a palatial thermal establishment, a casino, and wealth incommensurable. Then came Zola—does anyone read that orgulous *primaire* now? After him, Lasserre, equally fatuous. Next followed Huysmans,

most pernickety of converts, ascribing the physiognomy of Lourdes to the Devil, as might be expected, dismissing the Rosary Church as 'a dropsical circus, a Savoy cake-mould flanked by three domed boiler-covers of zinc, a hemorrhage of bad taste', and demolishing Lasserre so effectively that a libel-action all but ensued. Countless books on Lourdes have since poured from the press, but it may be noted that in the most recent outside-views the Zola-Inge note is absent. Scepticism has turned respectful, 'ideological' abuse is obsolete, at any rate in print and for the time being. A recent series of *Daily Mail* articles by Miss Rhona Churchill dealt objectively with medical testimony proven and irrefutable. That a hard core of dogged academic denial still exists is natural enough. Knaves and dupes—for a section of the Pundit Caste the division is fixed and irrevocable, and there is no need to trouble the *Bureau des Constatations Médicales*.

To assure such recusants that the Church received Bernadette's story as sceptically as they is admittedly difficult, since such information does not register. One may doubt whether Newman's attempt to explain to Kingsley the Catholic attitude towards the miraculous was anything but eight-and-a-half printed pages of lucid and logical reasoning thrown away, and in the end Newman seems to have realized it.

Many men when they hear an educated man so speak will at once impute the avowal to insanity, or to an idiosyncrasy, or to imbecility of mind, or to decrepitude of powers, or to fanaticism, or to hypocrisy. They have a right to say so if they will; and we have a right to ask them why they do not say it of those who bow down before the Mystery of mysteries, the Divine Incarnation.

Newman was of course addressing a Broad Church clergyman who presumably accepted the Incarnation; had he been trying to convince a Huxley he would have had to substitute something like the Fourth Dimension, if then invented. Yet—as he could have remarked if Lourdes had come into his argument—what antagonism more ideally Huxleyish than that of burly, surly Fr Peyremale, Bernadette's parish priest? 'Are you out of your mind? . . . All right, then. If it's our Lady, let her produce flowers on that rose-tree!'—and as the child drops a nervous curtsey and quits the presbytery her pastor snatches up a broom as if to give her a passing clout. It is not until the local authorities decide to shut Bernadette up in an asylum that Fr Peyremale takes her part

and forces them to think again. Rejecting her story still, he does his duty, reports to the bishop, and washes his hands of the affair. He is the kind of priest, the kind of Catholic, whom Bloomsbury will never understand.

The ecclesiastical commission of enquiry treated the girl hardly less sympathetically. She stood up to her examiners with a steadfastness remarkably reminiscent of St Joan at Rouen.

'What was the secret this Lady imparted to you?'
'If I told you, it wouldn't be a secret any more.'
'And if the Holy Father himself were to ask you?'

(Slight pause.)

'The Holy Father's a man as well. I should tell him nothing.'
'What prayers did the Lady tell you to say?'
'The Gloria.'
'Not the Pater and Ave?'

The question was worthy of a Cauchon or a Loyseleur. Our Lady, if indeed it were she with whom Bernadette was praying, would not say a prayer addressed to herself.

'I did what she told me.'

And again:

'Why did you eat grass? Only animals do that.'
'You eat salads, don't you?'
'Why did you kiss the ground?'
'Because our Lady told me to.'

A hundred years ago. At this moment they are building a huge new permanent *cit  * at Lourdes for pilgrims of every nation.

On 18 January 1862 the Church in the person of Bishop Laurence of Tarbes formally recognized the validity of the Apparitions, after exhaustive probing of the case in which doctors, chemists, and geologists all had a part. A considerable stumbling-block to scoffers now appears. Our Lady's confidante and messenger is not treated with respect, let alone reverence, nor exploited to fool the credulous, but packed off to a distant convent at her own desire to spend the rest of her life in obscurity. Her shrine in the chapel at Nevers is in the style of the period, which

has been known to distress persons of taste. Like that of the Little Flower it is exactly suitable and fulfils its function as much as any of the most beautiful shrines of Christendom. In this convent Bernadette—henceforth Sister Marie-Bernarde—underwent a discipline which might be called ruthless if it were not so enlightened. 'It was not very pleasant to be Bernadette at Nevers,' wrote one of her sister-nuns years afterwards. Having attracted a blaze of publicity and set the world by the ears despite herself, Sister Marie-Bernarde was henceforth to scrub floors and wash-up crockery, to wait on patients in the infirmary, and to sweep out the chapel. One supreme prearranged ordeal arrived during the visitation of the Bishop of Nevers in October 1867. After reading out in chapel a list of Sisters of Charity to be sent to work in various other towns of France, he turned to the Superior: 'What about Sister Marie-Bernarde?'

In a clear voice, and to the shocked astonishment of a crowded congregation, the Superior answered him:

'We hardly know what to do with her, my lord, she's good for nothing.'

The little nun turned pale, it is recorded, but recovered almost immediately. Her humility was in fact superhuman. She was already stricken with the tuberculosis which was to carry her off on 16 April 1879. Shortly after she had received the Last Sacrament for the last of several times another ecclesiastical commission presented itself. It was thought necessary to ask once more for the secret with which our Lady had entrusted her. Humbly and firmly she declined to reveal it, and the commission—here again St Joan's shadow flits across the scene—withdrawn defeated.

There was a reserve of calm and realist strength in this plump country girl, as in her illustrious predecessor, which could be highly disconcerting. No 'catch' question from her examiners ever gave her a moment's trouble. Statues of our Lady of Lourdes made her laugh outright. 'Oh, no! She's not a bit like those awful things!' From any kind of personal publicity she fled from the beginning. The crowds of Lourdes acclaimed her in vain, nor would she ever mention the Apparitions unless ordered by authority. Under their thin wax coating in the shrine at Nevers her incorrupt features display a patrician dignity which has surprised many. There is the same stamp on the features of the holy humble maid-servant of Lucca in Tuscany, whose seven-centuries-old incorrupt body in

San Frediano I was privileged to view not long ago. The face is that of a small, fragile aristocrat with the most delicate of Roman noses.

Z for St Zita, the Good Kitchen-Maid,
She prayed and she prayed and she prayed and she prayed.

Mgr Benson's nursery rhyme seems sufficiently to account for this mark in St Bernadette likewise. It prevails palpably over her surroundings (which are in the taste of the Rue Bonaparte during the Second Empire), as it prevails over those aspects of modern Lourdes, so repulsive to agnostic refinement, which evoke the recurring squeals with which everyone is familiar.

This is not the place to discuss Repository Art, its causes, prevention, and cure. Faith has its own aesthetic, remarked Léon Daudet. A convert clergyman quite recently recalled that he received his first intimation of the truth in a hideous little church, packed with appalling fripperies, in the Negro quarter of a town in the United States. It is possible that the damage to sensitive nerves occasioned by the noise and glitter and traffic of Lourdes, the dubious architecture, the gaudy hotels, the mass-produced objects of piety, the tinsel, the chromos, the crowds, and all the rest of it is something very good and necessary, the aesthete being privileged to suffer in union with that great ring of human pain encircling the Esplanade when the Host goes round.

In connexion with this there will be some necessity next year, no doubt, to explain to the world the 'dolorist' philosophy which Huysmans took from the Mystics, via Bloy, and proclaimed in his biography of Blessed Lydwine of Schiedam, in *L'Oblat*, in *Les Foules de Lourdes*, and in his own last agonies, as a solution of the whole mystery of human suffering. Pain accepted and shared as a token of Divine love, pain offered in expiation for oneself and for others—like the countless spiritual miracles of Lourdes it is not a theme likely to be taken up as a stunt by the popular Press. It provides nevertheless the missing key to be proffered to the shocked and baffled.

Si la Douleur n'est pas l'exact synonyme de l'Amour, elle en est, en tout cas, le moyen et le signe; la seule preuve que l'on puisse administrer à quelqu'un de son affection c'est de souffrir, lorsqu'il le faut, à sa place. . . . Dès lors, celui qui aime son Dieu doit souhaiter de peiner pour Lui.

If only God's elect are privileged to devote themselves totally to this dual end, the implorations of ordinary humanity at the Grotto have their legitimate place in the mystery as well. Recalling the sacrifice of the Holy Innocents, Huysmans indicates a powerful source of reinforcement here:

Et je rêve à ces processions désespérées où Dieu résiste et reste sourd, où l'assaut de nos supplices échoue. Il faudrait lancer, comme à la fin d'une bataille perdue, la vieille garde; et notre vieille garde à nous, elle serait composée de l'irrésistible phalange de prières des enfants.

All that chatter about 'blatant background' will seem, when once these tremendous ideas are grasped, to be quite monumentally silly, and on a par with that mass of cultured writing which expounds the significance of everything in the great European cathedrals except the altars.

Noisier and more crowded and more blatant than ever, Lourdes will blaze forth next year in our Lady's honour. Thousands more of those blue-and-white plaster confections will be coming down the assembly-lines; the French *bondieuserie* industry will undoubtedly touch a financial peak. There is a tendency among the more timorous of the faithful to explain these things away to carpers with an embarrassed cough, as of one trying to explain a bar-room joke to Queen Victoria. What our Lady thinks of this kind of snobbery may, one ventures to suggest, be reverently deduced from the fact that her five most recent apparitions in Europe—if Beauraing may be included—have been vouchsafed to children with no appreciation whatsoever of planes and values and totally unacquainted with Clive Bell's encyclical on Significant Form. If it is permissible to say so, again in all reverence, the Mother of God has put the aesthetes in their place. Art—the Church having inspired the best of it—is something but not everything. Bad art also serves, Lourdes reminds us. A parish priest in a remote Appennine hill-town appeared to me some months ago to have solved, *ambulando*, the problem involved as capably as anyone. His altar-piece, the apple of his eye, a magnificent Crucifixion by Lorenzo Lotto, hangs suitably framed at his own expense; his side-chapels are a riot of the spangles and pink simpering the vast majority of his parishioners prefer.

The Church in a nutshell, as one might say; inspirational but not worshipful of great art, majestically indifferent to the howls of

the virtuosi. That there is an annihilating riposte to this I am well aware, and asked point-blank how the Appennine solution would apply to Westminster Cathedral—where some seventy-five per cent of those huge congregations, it may be, secretly esteem spangles far above Bentley's noblest conceptions—I am as ready to blench and cry 'Ha!' as anyone. But I think there is a case for the democratic *décor* of Lourdes, and it is to be found in verses 6 and 7 of the Magnificat.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE OXFORD BOOK

The Oxford Book of French Verse. Second Edition. (Clarendon Press. 215.)

It is fifty years since St John Lucas issued his Anthology of French verse. It was reprinted fifteen times and its large diffusion did a great deal to stir the prodigious indifference of educated English readers to French poetry, and to dissolve prejudices inherited from the grotesque disdain of our Romantic critics. It was time for a new edition to consolidate a reaction, and to extend the field of selection at both ends. In recent years the study of Old French in our universities has won an honourable place and is no longer treated as principally a section of linguistic. A considerable addition to the text and to the notes was evidently justified. Mr Mansell Jones, seconded by Dr Whitehead of Manchester, has done his work very thoroughly.

No anthology can satisfy all tastes. I think a certain number of specimens and even of names might have been excluded without injustice, and in some few cases I regret omissions. In the earlier centuries, I am grateful for the *chanson* of Robert de Sémilli, who is new to me. I am disappointed that no place has been found for Rutebuef, Villon's most authentic predecessor. The selection of Ronsard's lesser comrades strikes me as too liberal. I am not yet converted to Maurice Scève, considered at least as a lyricist; but I am glad to meet D'Aubigné as something else than a furious partisan. Mathurin Régnier, a satirist of another sort, well deserved to figure here, but might have been sufficiently represented by a shorter piece than the epistle to the Marquis de Cœuvres. The impressive sonnets of Jean de Sponde, previously unknown to me, are very welcome. Was Madame Deshoulières necessary? Or Maucroix, whom the notes describe as 'court versifier, Canon of Reims and *bon viveur*' [vivant, please]?. It seems to me a pity that La Fontaine should be present only as the Fabulist: surely there was room for at least one elegy. Some of Racine's Hymns from the Breviary are wisely included; the epigrams belong to literary history, not to poetry.

In the sterile age, I grudge the space allotted to Chaulieu, J.-B. Rousseau, Lebrun-Pindare, to Ducis and to Florian. Voltaire, hardly

ever a poet, could not well be passed over. The selection from André Chénier leaves no doubt that this poet, so nearly a great poet, was essentially a poet of the eighteenth century. Would Millevoye and Delavigne have been missed? The great Romantics have been adequately displayed (there can be no higher praise)—even Victor Hugo. The Hugophobes have followed the Hugolâtres into oblivion and the great poet can at last be judged as a great poet only. I wish there had been room for *Le Satyr* and for the Hymn to Earth: they are essential. Banville, the delicate craftsman, deserved perhaps more space. Sully-Prudhomme is not much more than respectable.

The Introduction says very justly that 'the best of Leconte de Lisle's work was a continuation *ad finem*, not a new beginning'. That did not come with Baudelaire, who cannot be drawn from his splendid and desperate insulation: the sonnet 'Les Correspondances' is not, I think, a turning point. Verlaine at bottom was a new Romantic, but who first discovered the charm of the word half-spoken. Arthur Rimbaud's meteoric genius is fully exemplified here, even in prose (from *Une Saison en Enfer*).

Jules Laforgue in his brief career announced the coming anarchy which was at first an ill-directed attack against realism. Competitive definitions obscured the larger issues. Mallarmé almost alone strove to liberate poetry from the whole business of reproduction. His own achievement, though slight, is unforgettable. *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* and several sonnets must suffice in an anthology. 'The long association with the plastic arts was relinquished in favour of music', when suggestion replaced description and verse returned to incantation. But logically poetry should have become *abstract* before painting.

The first symbolists deserted. Henri de Régnier returned, with a new palette, to Parnassus; Jean Moréas along with Maurras founded a short-lived but not insignificant *Ecole Romane*. Others preferred simplicity to definitions: Francis Jammes, Samain, Charles Guérin, Paul Fort. I am sorry not to meet with the name of Paul Fort, who for more than sixty years has been producing *Ballades Françaises*: under a formula apparently inexhaustible they are charming evocations of the French countryside, French history and much else, saved from monotony by a sincere impressionism, though rather freakishly printed to look like prose. It is a pity that Anna de Noailles is not represented. She was a belated romantic without depth, but spontaneous and sensitive in a rare degree: a pagan soul. Francis Jammes was a sincere and accomplished poet, pastoral and pious.

The revival of Catholic inspiration in the poetry of this age in France is an impressive fact, worthily attested in the last pages of this Anthology by copious extracts from the lyrical works of Paul Claudel, fervid almost to the point of truculence, from Charles Péguy who died at the Marne, from Max Jacob who died in captivity, and other true

poets. I am not competent to assess the influence of surrealism on French poetry, though I am far from denying the importance of Guillaume Apollinaire. It may be true that 'a contemporary poem may count more images, *trouvailles*, and surprises than can be found in the most illustrious poem of the past' (G. Picon); the fact (if it is a fact) seems to me completely indifferent; it would have horrified Mallarmé. The poet who always proclaimed himself Mallarmé's pupil, Paul Valéry, never ceased to pursue perfection in form as well as the subtlest consistency of thought. *Cimetière Marin* is a great poem.

In the last numbers of this very comprehensive anthology, experiment and improvisation, especially in the matter of form, loom too large for my taste. It seems to me unfortunate that Claudel could not be satisfied, in Ode or Drama, with the traditional vehicle. I cling to the persuasion that verse is measured speech, so arranged that the ear perceives a pattern and expects a repetition, its elements being time, stress and number. The ear is the judge; but the trained ear.

This second edition of *The Oxford Book of French Verse*, enormously enriched, ought to spread widely the appreciation of a long neglected part of our European inheritance. It is a monument of taste and scholarship. I may be forgiven for adding that my testimony, for what it is worth, is that of one who himself in a distant age perpetrated on a limited scale a French poetical anthology!¹

I have detected *one* misprint: it occurs in *Le Pot au Lait*.

F. Y. ECCLES

CLAUDEL

The Poetic Drama of Paul Claudel. By Joseph Chiari. (Harvill Press. 15s.)

The Theme of Beatrice in the Plays of Claudel. By Ernest Beaumont. (Rockliff. 12s. 6d.)

THERE are certain French poets who present a special problem for English audiences. Corneille and Racine are the most celebrated, but we meet with the same problem in poets as different as Hugo, Péguy, and Claudel. It is the problem of language. It is not that the French they wrote is particularly difficult; it is the difficulty of accustoming ourselves to poetry which is very unlike English poetry, to poetry which seems abstract, rhetorical, declamatory. Racine now has a small but devoted band of admirers in this country and hostility to Corneille seems to be diminishing, but it has taken over two hundred years. It is possible that something of the same sort may happen with Claudel whose poetry has aroused singularly little enthusiasm in England or the United States.

¹ *A Century of French Poets* (Constable & Co, 1909).

What makes the problem intractable is the fact that it is a local problem. It does not exist for the majority of Frenchmen, and for this reason the books which have so far been written on Claudel in French can do little to help us to solve it. This should ensure a warm welcome for Dr Chiari's book. He brings to his task an unusual equipment which makes him well qualified to interpret Claudel to the English. He is a Frenchman who has made his home in this country, who writes in English, and who has a sound knowledge of English literature. Indeed, it is evident from his book that he is steeped in the English poetry of the Romantic Movement which has been one of the greatest obstacles to the Englishman's appreciation of the great French tragedians. 'Poetry,' he tells us, 'is language endowed with revelatory power, therefore used as a metaphysical instrument capable of unveiling the essential truths which exist in all things created.' He makes considerable play with the Romantic conception of genius. A genius is a writer who possesses abundant creative power, who is capable of rising to the greatest heights, but whose work is erratic and uneven. 'I have no doubt,' writes Dr Chiari, 'that Victor Hugo was a greater genius than Baudelaire, yet I feel that Baudelaire was perhaps the greater poet of the two, and that Racine, who combines the excellence of both, was a greater poet than either of them.' This prepares the way for placing Claudel. 'Claudel is the most extraordinary genius of our time, yet I have the feeling that Valéry, Eliot or Yeats may be greater poets than he is, and that Eliot's poetic drama may also be greater than his; for if the graphs of these poets' creations do not shoot up like sharp needles to Claudelian heights, they never sink to the depths which those of Claudel sometimes fall.'

It is an intriguing and somewhat bewildering picture. Dr Chiari admires Shelley far more than most contemporary English critics, but he has a still greater admiration for Racine. He thinks that Mr Eliot is a great poetic dramatist—a view to which many of us would find it excessively difficult to subscribe—but has considerable reservations about the great Corneille.

His book consists of a general introduction, a chapter on 'Drama and Poetry', detailed commentaries on all Claudel's important plays, a discussion of his *Art poétique*, and some 'Concluding Remarks'. Although he states roundly that Claudel seems to him to be 'without doubt the most important French poet-dramatist since Racine', he shows himself to be a relentless critic of Claudel's weaknesses. 'His imagination, like Shelley's, can operate on a cosmic scale, but he has neither the precision of the other great romantics who, like Coleridge and Wordsworth, could rise to the ideal world through reality and the senses, nor the apocalyptic vividness of a poet who, like Blake, trusted his inner eye and ear more than his perceptions.' 'Claudel's symbolism is imprecise and woolly, and he constantly shows that kind of arrested

poetic process which characterizes Victor Hugo, who so often floats in the limbo world which lies between the abstract concept and the concrete sensuous realization of the creations of the world.' 'Either out of sheer impatience or from imprecision of vision, he often prevents us with vast, vague, and sonorous creations which might or might not catch reflections of the human soul, while he hopes that the reader or the listener may supply what is missing and grasp the whole.' He puts his finger on what must be considered a fundamental weakness in a dramatist when he declares that 'C Claudel is not a psychologist'. Nor does the poet's theology escape censure. 'For the enthusiastic Claudelian,' he writes, 'that theology is part of his greatness, but I humbly confess that it proves for me an insuperable stumbling block'; and in another place it becomes 'the abhorrent theology'.

The chapters containing the commentaries on the individual plays will probably be found the most useful parts of the book, and few readers will feel disposed to challenge the author's preferences. He considers that the second version of *La Jeune fille Violaine* is Claudel's finest play, and much superior to *L'Annonce faite à Marie* which it finally became. He gives a high place to *Partage de midi* and *Le Soulier de satin*, but the second of these plays provides an interesting example of Claudel as the erratic genius. The principal weakness is seen to lie once again in the theology. 'There is grandeur in such visions, in such splendid faith, but there is also an inherent artistic weakness . . . there is an inevitable tendency to force the characters into channels which have been prepared for them and which they must follow.' 'Dramatic characters must live, and those of *Le Soulier de satin* do not live; they are part of a vast design, but they remain abstractions; they roam the world, but remain unconvincing.' 'One of Claudel's errors is to believe that because he involves the universe, because his heroes encompass the world and juggle with it as if it were a globe in a study, he has widened the scope of the drama. In fact, he only widens the field of his eloquence, but he does not increase the tension which makes drama.'

Those readers who like the present reviewer have considerable reservations about Claudel's achievement, will feel grateful to Dr Chiari for giving such cogent expression to their doubts and difficulties, and particularly for his strictures on 'the abhorrent theology', the 'sheer bombast', and the 'unbearable rhetoric' of some of the plays. They may also feel, however, that he is less successful in making good his claim that in spite of everything Claudel is a great poet or 'the most important French poet-dramatist since Racine'. (This is not perhaps such high praise as it sounds—there was not much competition.) He quotes some arresting passages from the plays, but he does not come to grips with the real problem. The great objection to Claudel's work is that though he is often a brilliant rhetorician, his rhetoric seldom becomes genuine poetry. His verse does not possess either the intensity or the

precision which belong to great poetry, and his language is not creative in the full sense. What Claudel does is to make a large play with theological terms which appeal to our own religious feelings, and with a 'cosmic' vocabulary which sometimes dazzles us, but he is incapable of transforming these terms as Mr Eliot did in the *Four Quartets*. His use of language is, in fact, 'incantatory' as opposed to what Dr Chiari calls 'revelatory'. I think we must go on to add that his main defect—it is a defect that he shared with Hugo—was a defect of intelligence. He was a man in whom powerful emotions were not matched by a correspondingly powerful intelligence. He did not possess the kind of intelligence which is always present in the greatest writers—the kind of intelligence which enables them to re-think traditional concepts, to sift and test experience, and finally to impose a fresh pattern on it.

Dr Beaumont's book is a shorter and much more specialized work than Dr Chiari's. Although he has a great admiration for Claudel, he is not primarily concerned with literary values. His book is an interesting study of the role of woman in Claudel's plays. He shows that it was derived from Dante, but he has to admit that Claudel's development was away from Dante. 'He transfers to the mortal woman,' he writes, 'a rôle which Dante reserved for the soul in glory'; and he adds that even in the saintly Violaine Claudel created 'a woman who is a "bearer of beatitude" in a far less exclusive sense than the Beatrice of Dante'. His discussion of Claudel's conception of love is particularly illuminating. 'The main characteristics of Claudelian love are indeed prevalent in the literature of courtly love.' He points out that in Claudel love is of its nature unhappy, that the lovers are invariably separated by an obstacle—usually marriage to a third party—and that 'Claudel's drama is designed to reveal the good which may be present in evil and which may eventually rise from it triumphantly'.

MARTIN TURNELL

BERNANOS THE CHRISTIAN

Le chrétien Bernanos. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. Translated by Maurice de Gandillac. (Editions du Seuil. 1200 frs.)

It is now nine years since the death of Bernanos and, though it may be too soon to perceive his full stature, his work can be seen in a certain perspective. Slight as it is in bulk, it has an extraordinary quality which sets it apart from most other literature of the twentieth century or indeed of any time. A scholar who cannot be suspected of excessive sympathy for Catholicism, Professor Denis Saurat, has called

him 'a giant of the Catholics', adding with somewhat puzzling concern for his readers: 'Be on your guard when you meet him.'¹

It is true, however, that his vision has a compulsive force and, though he claimed that he did not know how to write, the greatness of his artistry is apparent if we compare his novels with, for instance, those of Charles Williams, whose cosmic vision is of the same order. The supernatural world of Bernanos, which is hardly less sensational than that of the English writer, gives an almost terrifying impression of authenticity which Charles Williams, reduced to expressing his eschatological vision through the operation of magic, is far from achieving. There is, however, another English novelist who, in spite of an immense difference in religious conviction, has perhaps a closer affinity with Bernanos. This is L. H. Myers, whose stark integrity, whose fierce purity and hatred of compromise, so fully embodied in that first and very Rimbaldian novel of his, *The Orissers*, link him with all those for whom *le pur, le fort*, is the ideal; yet the manner of Myers' death may seem to offer a commentary on the validity of his own particular vision.

In England the work of Bernanos, apart from *The Diary of a Country Priest*, appears to be little known, whereas his contemporary, Mauriac, enjoys great fame. Admittedly, the novels of Mauriac are easier to understand at a first reading and they are less fundamentally disturbing. Bernanos is not concerned with the *désespoir charnel* which, according to him, sweats on every page of Mauriac's work.² As Fr Urs von Balthasar excellently says in the work under review:

C'est que le thème du péché charnel n'intéresse pas Bernanos, qu'il ne l'occupe pas plus qu'il n'a occupé le Christ ou les Apôtres. Vu dans la lumière du Christ, ce péché n'est que pur ennui, et pas même l'abîme du mal (p. 258).

The viewpoint of Bernanos is not that of the psychologist exploring with morose pleasure the deeper recesses of the heart. His point of departure is finely brought out by the German priest:

Bernanos présuppose comme authentique la vérité de la foi et du sacrement—c'est-à-dire la possibilité pour l'homme de vivre, en tant que tel, de la vie que lui communique le Christ; la question pour lui est de savoir ce qui se passe lorsqu' 'un homme, *partant de là*, vit conformément aux exigences logiques qu'implique ce point de départ. Dès lors, en effet, ce qui détermine sa vie, ce ne sont plus les lois de sa *psyché*, mais les lois surnaturelles' qui régissent la vie du Christ et de son Eglise (p. 256).

It is a fact, as Fr Urs von Balthasar states in his introduction, that in the younger generation of writers Catholics are no longer in the fore-

¹ *Modern French Literature*, 1870-1914, Dent, 1946, p. 109.

² *La Liberté, pourquoi faire?* Gallimard, 1953, p. 132.

front; in France the generation of Bernanos and Mauriac is the last in which Catholics count. The German writer considers that there has been little acknowledgement of the contribution made to the Catholic tradition by these imaginative writers, whose immediacy makes a so much more vivid impact upon the reader than the abstraction of the theologian or the writer of spiritual treatises. Hence his book, which is likely to remain unique. To write it there was required the theological knowledge, the spiritual experience and perception, and, if not affinity of temperament with Bernanos, at least sufficient sympathy of outlook to secure comprehension and appreciation, of all of which Fr Urs von Balthasar gives proof. This is the most substantial and the spiritually profoundest book on Bernanos to appear, being an attempt, not to expound or explain the French writer, but to set him in relationship with the sacramental life of the Church. From the outset we are drawn within that life of faith, within the supernatural life of the spirit, which Balthasar rightly characterizes as the point of departure for Bernanos in all that he wrote. There are copious extracts from every work of Bernanos, which the German writer has assimilated to an extraordinarily high degree, and those previously unacquainted with the French writer's work can gain from this book a full notion of the import of that work, though the novels must be read for their effect, which is cumulative, to be felt.

Bernanos and his work are viewed as a cohesive whole—there is no division of his books into novels and essays—as the manifestation of an interior life intimately at one with that of the Church and of Christ Himself; thus all that is individual in Bernanos finds little or no place. At the beginning of the main part of his book, *L'Eglise milieu vital*, Balthasar says:

Ce qu'est l'homme, nous ne le saurons pas en étudiant l'individu Bernanos, mais en discernant en lui l'écho vivant d'une vérité qui ne lui appartient pas, car elle est le Christ même, le Dieu fait homme, le Rédempteur maître de la création, qui a marqué de son sceau souverain l'essence la plus intime de ses créatures. Or, c'est l'Eglise qui nous offre l'image visible de cette souveraineté, et c'est d'elle surtout qu'il sera question dans les pages qui suivent (p. 183).

Bernanos is 'assumed', as it were, into the body of Catholic devotional literature, of the finest and deepest sort; he is freed, purified, of his fallible human dross. That is not to suggest that Fr Urs von Balthasar presents an emasculated Bernanos, for the edification of less stalwart souls. He is not at all that kind of person; he neither diminishes nor idealizes his subject; but he sees him in a perspective which shears him of all accidentals. Neither psychological nor aesthetic considerations have any part in this viewpoint. They do make incidental appearances,

and the long sub-section *Ordre et pénitence* is particularly valuable for the penetrating analyses of important elements of the imaginative vision, but Balthasar's main concern is of another order, that with which Bernanos himself was concerned. His book, which presents an authentic portrayal of Bernanos, does him the highest service, though it does not, of course, render unnecessary further works on Bernanos of more modest pretensions, works in which such considerations as temperamental proclivities, early environment and experiences, and kindred factors receive thorough investigation, and especially works in which the mystery of the imaginative vision is explored as fully as possible and related to the individual, with all his fears, dissatisfactions and strivings, in whom it arose.

There is perhaps a danger at the present time of regarding extreme and radical views as being most nearly coincident with truth, even on the level of everyday living. It may, then, be salutary to remember that as well as Bernanos and Bloy there are Fénelon and St François de Sales. While it may be argued that the circumstances of the mid-twentieth century demand that violence be met with violence, the violence with which the Kingdom of Heaven is ravished, and harshness be met with harshness, the harshness which spares neither self nor others in its stripping man bare of all merely natural trappings, it may nevertheless remain true that for the mediocre bulk of mankind the quiet voice is more effective than the anguished cry, the way of gradual ascension more likely to be followed than the bold risk of the great leap. The anguish of Bernanos may indeed be the anguish caused by sin, the sin of the whole cosmos, but it is also anguish caused by the abyss within oneself, the spectacle of frightening potentialities in the darker depths. The element of self-pursuit, of self-flagellation, which there undoubtedly is in his imaginative work and which Fr Urs von Balthasar but briefly touches towards the end of the sub-section *Extrême Onction et Communion*, could be profitably investigated. However, it is a measure of the effectiveness of Bernanos that he can disturb us sufficiently to make us seek arms to use against him, which we may only use half-heartedly, entertaining a secret conviction, fear even, perhaps, that that ruthless vision of his, with its nightmarish quality, approximates nearer than most to the plight in which we should be seen, or in which at least we should see ourselves.

ERNEST BEAUMONT

THE CHARACTER OF EMMANUEL MOUNIER

The Character of Man. By Emmanuel Mounier. Translated by Cynthia Rowlands. (Rockliff. 42s.)

Too little is known about the remarkable Emmanuel Mounier in this country, though a handful of his books have been translated. His importance in France, however, only partly rests upon his books: more particularly it stemmed from his editorship of the review, *Esprit*, and his leadership of a marginal left philosophical and political group, the Personalists, for which *Esprit* was the spokesman. One guesses that it was never easy for Frenchmen to understand just precisely where Mounier stood in some of the battles of his time, and it has been still less easy for us across the Channel to make sense of his particular standpoint. Precisely what are we to make of a devout Catholic who demanded a revolution 'in a sense pitiless' and who also wrote (after the war), 'Russia and the East are today speaking in a language which is often strange and new to our ears, about the relationships between man and his liberty. We are shocked, but perhaps it will help us to free ourselves from the invisible prison of our narrow, jealous and sterile interpretations of liberty. We should not be overhasty in refusing and condemning. We should not be the worried guardians of such revolutionary energy'? This would suggest political judgements which possessed the naivety of the press conferences of the Dean of Canterbury. At the same time, one who appeared sometimes to stand so lightly and generously towards the crimes of the Soviet could write about Christianity more harshly than any atheist, that 'an imperceptible stiffening has petrified rigorous Christianity into some morose and bitter malady'. Were these judgements all, one might indeed dismiss him as one of those peculiar Christians who are so over-sensitive about the judgements of their opponents that they end by adopting standards they began by condemning. Fortunately they are not all. Mounier was many things—an astonishingly brilliant and erudite writer, a most conscientious and self-critical thinker who detested easy judgements and founded 'Une Sociologie des Profondeurs', a resistance leader, and a saintly man who died suddenly in 1950 in a fit of weeping as though borne down by the sorrows of the world which all his vast labours had failed to alleviate.

Mounier was a disciple of Charles Péguy, and that explains a lot. Péguy, the poet and Dreyfusard, learnt his Christianity in the political battles with reaction and anti-semitism at the end of the century, and returned from a reconnaissance of radicalism and atheism to the Church in which he had been nurtured. In his review, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, he maintained a fearless political and spiritual independence

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which deprived him of the support of cliques, clubs, and conformists. When he died in 1914 at the Battle of the Marne—just as he would have wished to die—he was barely known. His genius has only been recognized since. Mounier's first book was about Péguy, and conscientiously he founded *Esprit* to carry on the traditions of the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. He inherited Péguy's hatred of humbug and falseness in and out of the Church, and some of his perverseness. Catholicism of the last century in France was pretty generally in opposition to the Republic, which was officially coloured by agnosticism, rationalism, and anti-clericalism. It must have seemed impossible to many Catholics to imagine how they could possibly be anywhere but in opposition. Péguy, however, was as fierce and loyal a republican as any liberal or socialist, and with him begins therefore what we can only describe as that modern and forward-looking French Catholicism which Mounier inherited and developed. Mounier thought of himself above all as one called by God to reinterpret Christianity to the modern world, and to analyse that world to Christians so that they might there find the Holy Spirit working and no longer dread it. Yet that is almost too cold a way of speaking about his mission, for he sought generously and lovingly to draw up all that was good and forward-looking in the modern spirit into the bosom of the Church, and in return to commit the Church to the new dangerous world in the making. We can only understand him if we think of him as the most intensely modern of Christians who wrote with Gallic crispness 'The First Christians? Perhaps ourselves'.

Traité du Caractère, here translated as *The Character of Man*, was written during the years of hiding, when Mounier was part of the Resistance. It is not the passionate volume that we might have expected from him during that period, but a work of vast erudition which seeks in the original to set out all that is known of the character of man and of the influences brought to bear upon it from inheritance and birth and nurture onwards. It is the greatest of Mounier's works, one which has become a standard work in colleges and teachers' training institutes and has achieved the remarkable sale of 200,000 copies. In importance (though not in scope or anything else, of course) it could be regarded as equivalent to Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*. The 800 pages of the French edition include, apart from psychology, such studies as the influence of the physical and social backgrounds and the role of the physiological factors, including glandular activity, on the development of the human person. So that we may say that medical, political, and even geopolitical factors entered into Mounier's original survey. This comprehensiveness is lacking in the translation. Faced with the necessity to reduce the original volume to a third of its length, the translator, Miss Cynthia Rowlands, has eliminated all that in Mounier's original work was a boiling down of the scientific theories (some of them by now out of date) of other people, and most case-

histories, and sought to retain only that which reveals Mounier's personal contribution, a dangerous undertaking.

Before discussing this it is necessary to draw attention to a human study which has some importance on the continent: I mean 'characterology'. As far as I know only abroad are there institutes of Character or Characterology. Like the Tavistock Clinic and other such places, they have a therapeutic justification, but many of them also pursue research on a teutonic scale into the growth and nature of the human character. This too vast and uncontrollable a field of research has never appealed to the empirical temper of the British and for this reason one cannot expect the same impact from a truncated Mounier in this country as the full volume achieved in France. Yet here, though abbreviated, is the most complete guide we have yet seen to this particular study, which at least has the virtue of seeking to see man completely in the round. It is, Mounier declares, 'intended to be scientific'. The trouble with characterology is that by its very nature it is also bound to be determinist. We have only to think of the Freudian contribution to the understanding of human nature to see that. Here is what Mounier says about one Freudian concept:

Repression is a withdrawal which occurs unknown to the subject. According to Freud, it is due specifically to wishes of an infantile origin and of a sexual character, repressed by the 'reality principle', that is to say by social adaptation. But the mechanism described by Freud may operate at any time that a powerful wish is rejected or severely wounded by an external shock. It withdraws silently, allows itself to be forgotten. But here the retreat is not a renunciation. The disappointed desire accumulates in the shadow of the self an emotional charge, the 'affect' which remains available and aggressive, ready to discharge itself on other objects and a threat to the foundations of effective life; 'complexes' crystallize over the scars and give rise to the majority of the disturbances of consciousness.

There we have simply one dilemma of many facing the Christian analyst of character. An unknown withdrawal, storing itself away in the darkness, works upon the human character with the deadliness and irresistibility of a poison upon the human body. What, in such a case, happens to the Christian concept of human freedom?

More generally, characterology very naturally seeks to *type* human beings—the introvert, the extravert, the morose, the depressed, the emotive and so on. What is a type? Is it the result of a given psycho-physical structure? We do not blame a man for having a long nose. We accept that it is the gift of his heredity and no one can alter it without violence to his given nature. Do we apply the same standard to the pusillanimous, the dishonest, the fakers, the thieves? Or do we again

fix them in one or other of the many types psychology, psychiatry, and alienism reveal, along with the schizoids and manic-depressives? Or do we regard them as responsible? To regard them as responsible is to recognize their power to change, to become something which at present they are not: if they are liars and humbugs, to become honest and sincere. If we recognize this power, what becomes of the concept of *type*? Indeed, what is the point of 'typology' at all? These would inevitably be questions for any Christian sociologist. They are more acute for Mounier because he is the founder of personalism, the creed which, borrowing much from existentialism, asserts the centrality of the human person, regards it not simply as impossible but as impious to seek to analyse the personal 'objectively', 'scientifically' as if the person were 'a patient etherized upon a table'. Yet this is precisely what characterology and typology must be constantly seeking to do.

Of course, Mounier is not ignorant of these dilemmas. His gallop among the psychologists and behaviourists is the more interesting and challenging because of his continual awareness of the recall his Commander may make to Christian values. The result of his reconnaissance is an astonishing revelation of the *Christian* possibilities of much modern knowledge at which we have hitherto looked askance. It is also a critique of it.

Mounier rejects to begin with the presumptions of typology. 'There is no such thing as a pure type . . . Types are realities of a statistical nature . . . Types are not stable crystallizations' are the headings of his paragraphs of rejection.

Typology suffers from even graver weaknesses . . . it defines the individual by that which is not himself, just as a silhouette defines a body by its surrounding space and not by the internal plastic energy which shapes it. It defines the edges instead of revealing the origins, and those edges are in fact the stopping places, the limitations and sometimes the deviations of personal effort. Thus one might say that, in one sense, every type is a negative type . . . We are only typical in so far as we have failed to become fully personal. So those wonderful typological portraits, so easy to read and memorize, are dangerous refuges from understanding . . .

'*Character is not a fact, but an act,*' he puts in italics and 'The synthetic unity of character is not a product, it is a living effort and this effort may be effective far beyond what the majority of men consider possible.' Again:

The self is not only an agent of compromise with reality, more or less sceptical as to the possibilities and value of its work: it is reaction against the given, a will to affirmation and to power, a capacity for devotion.

He understands that the effort to *type* takes place with states that are past, or description would in fact be impossible, but a human personality is that which is constantly moving forward into the openness and freedom of an unconditional time and space, and occupying them. If this sounds metaphysical one can only say that it is meant to be for, of course, Mounier approaches his study from an existentialist metaphysical position which, though impossible to summarize, is real and important. 'Existence finds no direct language of communication with us either through reason or through the sense perceptions,' he writes:

It can only transmit itself indirectly and inadequately, through a cipher which is never fully interpreted, whose secret is always elusive. And further, we are not dealing with objects, but with ourselves, these men here. If there were a science, very complicated perhaps, but complete, which could explain us, we should have to admit that liberty was a phantom of the imagination. The powers of the world would not fail to illustrate this conclusion by annexing the science of character to their arsenal of techniques of domination. But the person is a source of liberty, and therefore as obscure as the heart of a flame.

One is entitled to ask—if Mounier sees the character as alterable and the person as essentially a fluid 'seeking-forward', is anything gained by a careful working over of the typological characters which contemporary psychology has pinned like butterflies in a museum cabinet? We have to accept that there is. Mounier's tour of the psychologies is masterly and his investigation justifies his bold claim that 'Characterology is to the knowledge of man what theology is to the knowledge of God: an intermediary science between the experience of mystery and the rational elucidation to which the manifestations of this mystery may be subjected.' It is a positive study, standing out against the 'dark background of negative psychology'.

I am reminded by these justifications that Wilhelm Dilthey, the German psychologist and historian, asked for a descriptive human psychology. Man, by his nature, Dilthey said, escapes scientific analysis. The only course open, therefore, was to embark on a description of human states and acts and to make it as exhaustive as possible. Here, from Mounier, is such a descriptive psychology. The use of types and categories in Mounier's hands merely serves to simplify the effort to illustrate and define the manifold forms of human behaviour and to fix certain characteristics in our minds. Without such a formal structure the task would be beyond human wit: no matter what dangers the typology of the psychologists gives rise to the risk has to be taken unless one proposes simply to write an unending novel. The result, in *The Character of Man*, is not simply 'une sociologie', but 'une psychologie des profondeurs'.

I am starting on an adventure of discovery, the limits and drama of which I do not know, so indefinite seems the path and so unfathomable the abyss which contemporary psychology, from its profound experience, has opened beneath our feet. The quest is pursued through every layer of the personality, the thin strata of consciousness, which it can help to illuminate, and the bottomless pit of unconscious life. This quest only isolates us if we confine it to the narrow sphere of rationalization of thought or feeling, to the play of ideas and the cult of self. But we know today that the register of the visible and invisible waves of personality is no less extensive than that of material waves. This exploration has only begun. From the shadows of the infra-conscious to the lights of the supra-conscious, passing through the subconscious, we meet all the voices of heaven and earth, forces from the depth of the historic past and others, still almost unknown, coming from the collective living.

And in the midst of the unexplored vastity which we have to reckon with now as the true dimension of the human person, 'the self is identical, just as one is constant, or faithful, by a continuous act of commitment'.

It remains only to be said that this latest work of Mounier's to be published in England by the enterprising Rockliff Press deserves to be widely read and discussed. Its publication will help to counteract the steady drift apart of English and continental scholarship. The translator, Miss Cynthia Rowlands, is to be congratulated on making the best of a hard assignment.

LESLIE PAUL

A CONTRIBUTION TO CRITICISM

Literature Considered as Philosophy. By Everett W. Knight. (Routledge & Kegan Paul. 25s.)

The Image of France. By David Tylden-Wright. (Secker & Warburg. 18s.)

ENGLISH philosophers have, as a whole, ignored existentialism, or have treated it with disdain, and few literary critics have been able to relate the literary and philosophical aspects of the movement. Dr Knight's book, therefore, fulfils a great need for our better understanding of the European situation, and all the more so in that it is an excellently thought out and written work, and a positive contribution to criticism.

Dr Knight's theme is the important movement which, since the end of the war, has played such a great part in French thought, but which, in fact, already showed signs of growth in the last century. In French

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literature, it can be seen in Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Valéry, and opens out with Gide, Malraux, Saint-Exupéry and Sartre, the four main authors whom Dr Knight analyses. Existentialism is not so much a school as a movement, like liberalism or humanism, and it is for this reason that we find its expression, not so much in works of academic philosophy, but in literature. But there is another reason why existentialism should be more closely related to literature than any of the traditional philosophies have been. The purpose of the existential thinkers is not to deduce or to analyse, but simply to describe what exists, and not even then to use the description in order to build up a coherent picture, or explanation, of the world. Truth, therefore, becomes contained in existence itself, and is not the structure which is superimposed on what we can see. It is, therefore, not the field of a technical discipline, whether logical or scientific, but the very essence of creative writing. Like the best literature, existentialism is free from following any party line, from propaganda which distorts, but at the same time it avoids the romantic danger of withdrawal from the human situation either into the Self or the Absolute.

The new attitude to things is marked by a return to the concrete; that is, the author must efface himself before his surroundings, and to see them as they are, neither as projections of his own conscious or subconscious, nor as reflexions of a higher reality, in the manner of Chateaubriand or Proust or Plato. In many ways, this is a highly estimable aim, but one cannot ignore the dangers which beset a Christian thinker who works along these lines. The main fault of Dr Knight's work is that he ignores entirely the existential current in Christian thought. He accepts its presence in earlier writers like Pascal and Kierkegaard (and might have added St Augustine), but goes on to make the extraordinary statement that no one can accept today the Christian view of man. It is admittedly true that there is a certain relativity in the history of philosophy, and that certain aspects or topics have been specially emphasized in one particular age because of particular social or economic conditions; but we cannot accept a complete relativity in which there is no permanence whatsoever. The position which Dr Knight and the existentialists of whom he is writing defend is, they claim, based on the current attitude to the universe, that is, the absurd one as seen by contemporary physics. But here they are doing one of the things which they have expressly been trying to avoid, that is, to break away from the scientific rigorism of the Newtonian age; it was wrong for the rationalists to explain the whole universe as they explained the physical part of it; but their mistake was not merely to attempt a scientific explanation of the non-physical universe, but to attempt *any* equation of physics and metaphysics. Their entire atheistic position seems to be based on a strange logical fallacy. Sartre makes much of the idea that 'If God exists, man is nothing'; but what he is

really saying is that, if God exists, man as conceived in an atheist situation is an absurdity. The fault seems to lie in a vicious tradition of the Cartesian dichotomy of matter and spirit, whereby it is only too easy to equate matter with reality and spirit with unreality. Sartre refuses the God-hypothesis because, he says, it is essential to Man's dignity to 'keep his feet on the ground'; but under the Christian doctrine of the universal coinherence, to use Charles Williams' term, Man's feet are as much on the ground whether he is in the world or in the Kingdom of Heaven. The existential line of thought has plainly a lot to contribute to us today, but we cannot accept this particular branch of it which, unfortunately, Dr Knight presents as the only one. In his desire for objectivity, he has ignored that this might be merely a projection of the individual who is himself aimless and incoherent. It is time that we broke with the concentration on Self which has dominated so much post-Reformation philosophy in order to return to the value of the community, as the existentialists have done, but we must see Man, not only in the community, but also in Communion.

Mr Tylden-Wright's book belongs to the delightful romantic-critical tradition of writing about books and authors which one has enjoyed reading; a tradition which by now, I should have thought, is almost without value. In a miscellaneous collection of essays on French authors from Anatole France to Camus, he gives a number of snap-judgements in a rather journalistic style, sometimes obvious and sometimes wrong (can he really say that Gide was cynical?) interspersed with quotations, sometimes in English and sometimes in French (why?) the latter being quite unbelievably full of misprints. Mr Tylden-Wright obviously loves French literature enough to want to make it give us an image of France, so why miss out really important people like Proust and Sartre? Loving literature is not enough; if one is going to write about it, one must have something to say.

ALEX MATHESON CAIN

THE CRITICAL ABSOLUTE

The Voices of Silence. By André Malraux. (Secker & Warburg. £6 6s.)

ANDRÉ MALRAUX's *The Voices of Silence* is a reflexion through a rare and uniquely equipped mind of our modern sensibility in art. A spawning-ground of ideas, it is often icily sharp, often excitedly incoherent, at times brilliantly profound, at times irritatingly dogmatic.

There is a gigantic amount of material in this book, ranging as it does over all the known manifestations of the human spirit in art; and there is a lack of complete integration—this mass of material has not been completely subdued. Originally published in America in three

volumes entitled *The Psychology of Art*, *The Voices of Silence* is a rewritten, reorganized single volume which endeavours to alter the meandering course of the first three volumes into one coherent flow. M. Malraux has performed a vast excavation in a quarry of theories, speculations, ages, ideas, and, above all, words, and it is not surprising that there are many outcrops and unsmoothed defiles, and these escarpments cast shadows.

These dark and shadowed areas may in part be due—apart from a failure of the understanding—to the fact that the book is a translation. Mr Stuart Gilbert has done a fine job in trying to preserve the flavour of the original prose, in mobilizing and choosing his words and phrases, but this is a hard book even in the original French. One is aware on reading of a sense of strain, one flounders occasionally and has to search desperately for a meaning to catch hold of in a welter of words. At other times this obscurity—if I may use the word—leaves one with the equivalent sensation of rubbing the dust off the glass in front of a picture before one can see it, and one gets tired at times of this persistent labour. But whatever their cause, all these are the faults of plenitude.

The organization of the book into four parts provides a basic framework of structure on which Malraux hangs the living prose of his ideas. In the first—'Museum Without Walls'—he examines the validity of a work of art for his consideration, for what it is in itself as distinct from any psychological aura which the onlooker may add, and which is an impurity in contemplation. He then goes on to consider the method of presenting the fruits of his contemplation in book form—this he does fascinatingly, with conjecture on the value of photography in presentation, a quite intriguing section which apparently it occurred to no one else to write before.

The 'Metamorphosis of Apollo' traces the occurrence of art from Greece through Roman, Byzantine, Gothic, and Romanesque in the West, and through the many facets, regional and temporal, of Buddhist Art in the East. M. Malraux makes continual reference to the fact that he is not tracing a rising graph of relative achievement from Greco-Roman to the present day, but a series of separate and distinct peaks, each representing the development of a *style*, a separate living thing, the essence of the art of a period, evolved from the common belief, producing the common culture, built on accidentals of place and time.

In the longest section, 'The Creative Process', M. Malraux treads on dangerous ground. His theories on the evolution of the artistic end-product are extraordinarily convincing, show a profound understanding of literary creation, and are admirably supported by the extreme catholicity of his scholarship; but he is hampered by the necessity of finding a solution which will be a common denominator to all artistic

creation, and his efforts underline the fact that no theory of art can be completely inclusive. Pursuing the idea of style as the essence of art, Malraux holds that each new style is not an evolution from, but a metamorphosis of, a preceding style, art arising from art—which leads one to an interesting speculation on a first cause in art, which M. Malraux does not investigate—thus making comprehensible such statements as that an artist is not interested in nature but in painting, that representation may be accessory to a style, style is never a means of representation, that art is not an extension, idealization, or transformation of the world, it is another world.

M. Malraux is, I think, a little unkind to nature. His relegation of nature to an inferior position is indeed just; it is the rediscovery of this age, and has rescued such stylists as Piero Della Francesca, El Greco, and—through Malraux's inspired championship—Georges de Latour, from any shadows which obscured their reputations and achievements; but he then fails to do nature the justice of its inferior position. In the evolution of an original artist's style there is a subtle balance between what he sees in other paintings and what he sees in nature, an essential point of contact—not of overlap—of two different worlds, both of which contribute to the new synthesis, in the formation of which stylistic end-product the artist's own particular plastic imagination is catalytic.

And in the 'Aftermath of the Absolute' the author once again takes up the thread of artistic activity which he let go after his study of the appearance of the great collective religious styles, and explores the reasons for their passing. He follows this with the study of the collective ideal of beauty (late Renaissance, Baroque) which replaced them, and the eventual replacement of that ideal with another absolute, that of the properties of art in itself, the sudden and unprecedented phenomenon of modern art in which art began an involuntal voyage of discovery into the language of painting. Reference to nature now became merely a vehicle, a use of common forms—common to the artist and onlooker—to support his paint, the inverse of the preceding style in which the paint had been secondary—the clothes in which an ideal of beauty was clothed. Malraux mentions again and again the astonishingly new perspective which this modern art has afforded us, resuscitating whole tracts of artistic activity which had hitherto been stylistically incomprehensible, the arts of Africa and New Ireland, of Java and Mexico.

There is much repetition and overlap in the four sections, the weight of M. Malraux's knowledge, the very dimensions of his scholarship are at times crushing, but while the result is often repetitive, peripheral, and tangential, just as in the end one would not sacrifice the diverticula with which Henry James's work is studded, so too is one loath to do without M. Malraux's meanderings. So much for the content. What is his message, what has moved him to write?

The whole orientation of Malraux's book, his constant reiteration in at times almost inspired prose, is towards the nobility of art, the existence of art as a separate and distinct world completely integrated within its boundaries, and thus the existence of the work of art as isolated by its intrinsic qualities. Art is the only thing which snatches order from the cosmic chaos in which man, like a louse, clings to his spinning globe, the only thing, he implies, in which man can assume the fullest dignity of his nature, the only thing through which he can consider that chaos with some degree of equanimity. It is this, this tremendous belief in the artistic reintegration of forms which makes *The Voices of Silence* not merely another book of art criticism, but almost a religion of art, and one feels that art is the only thing in which Malraux's sensitive soul—and his experience of humanity has been profound—can contemplate his fellows without disquiet. But only too clearly he senses with something of sadness that art is outside behaviour and is no final solution to living.

The style of the book is the grand style. There is an absence of the ephemeral, the petty, the bitterly ironic. Considering the prospect of the ages M. Malraux has no time for the professional critic's discreet exhibitionism, or his epicurean mincing through fields of attributions and controversies. He is too conscious of mortality, too aware of the human situation to practise such niceties. Thus does he make the grand style valid, thus does his surging bejewelled prose find an answering resonance within the reader.

Malraux writes on art in a semi-literary fashion, sounding—in translation at least—like a mixture of Ruskin and an excited Pater. But Malraux is a product of his time, and modern concepts of art criticism, many of which he has helped to form, dominate his thought. Yet this book is contrary to the purist tradition of art criticism which has evolved during the past few decades and which perhaps reaches its highest level in the criticism of Matteo Marangoni and Herbert Read. I think that this book will do much towards undermining that school and will lead to a freer and more literary method of writing on art.

So there it is; a long cry, a sustained organ-note, a diminisher of mortality, for all its faults—a great book. And as one re-reads the book one slowly becomes aware of something further, something elusive, distant, and slowly apprehended. Across each revealing sentence lies the shadow of the mind which produced it; eventually one is aware of contact with a consciousness of noble breadth and quality, with a mind which has the texture of greatness.

BRIAN O'DOHERTY

BARBEY D'AUREVILLY

Les Diaboliques. By Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly. Introduction by Peter Quennell. Drawings by Dodie Masterman. (Camden Illustrated Classics.) (Paul Elek. 12s. 6d.)

JULES BARBEY D'AUREVILLY was born in 1808 and died in 1889. It is, perhaps, his long life that makes him a ubiquitous figure. He is always turning up in slightly unexpected places in nineteenth-century literary history, or making the unexpected remark. It was Barbey who, for a moment, replaced the dead Maurice de Guérin in his sister's affections; Barbey who had that strange discussion with Baudelaire on the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which made an admiring listener wonder 'whether the pair of them had not studied theology in some seminary when they were young'. It was Barbey again who observed in one of the very few intelligent reviews of the *Fleurs du mal*:

'Après *Les Fleurs du mal*, il n'y a plus que deux partis à prendre pour le poète qui les fit éclore: ou se brûler la cervelle . . . ou se faire chrétien.'

Barbey was a prolific writer and turned out a considerable number of novels, stories and critical essays but, as Mr. Quennell remarks in his admirable introductory note, only two of his books—*Les Diaboliques* and *Du Dandysme et de Georges Brummell*—'have achieved any degree of renown among modern English readers'.

The tendencies of an age are often more apparent in the lesser writers than in the work of the masters, and it is not the least of Barbey's services that he helps us towards a better understanding of the romantic aftermath in France. He was, as Mr. Quennell says, 'an artist born out of his time' and his 'dandyism' was a protest against the growing materialism which threatened to submerge the artist altogether. Mr. Quennell compares his dandyism with Baudelaire's. There are certainly resemblances, but there is one important difference. The value of Baudelaire's dandyism lies in its emphasis on the dignity of man, on the supreme value of the individual. In spite of the period décors, his attitude was a heroic one; his face was turned towards the future; and his great essay on Constantin Guys, which contains the fullest exposition of his theory, is as actual today as it was in 1860. In some ways, indeed, it is more actual. The dangers against which Baudelaire was fighting have increased rather than diminished, and, at a time when we are living under the shadow of the police state which threatens to turn us all into form-filling robots, the essay makes very salutary reading. We cannot speak of Barbey's *Du Dandysme* with the same confidence. He is inclined to pay too much attention to externals and too little to the real dangers. His attitude is a defensive one. The setting

of nearly all his work is a defeated and broken aristocracy looking nostalgically backwards to a past which it knows can never return. His aristocrats no longer have any valid function in the modern state. The vitality, which was responsible for their great achievements, unable to find any proper outlet, becomes perverted and is transformed into the monstrous passions which he studies in his novels and stories.

The setting of the six stories contained in *Les Diaboliques* is melodramatic. A woman dies at the moment of consummation. Two people, a prey to a violent and monstrous passion, have no children because, says the novelist, 'they love one another too much. The fire which devours, consumes and does not produce.' An inscrutable Scotsman seduces mother and daughter, murders them both and disappears. The daughter of Don Juan's mistress sits in a chair which has been occupied by Don Juan and at once becomes *enciente*. The wife of a Spanish grandee becomes a courtesan of the lowest class to revenge herself on the husband who has killed her lover. In 'At a Dinner of Atheists'—but I must leave the reader to discover the subject for himself. For in this story the nineteenth-century Catholic novelist ventures into realms where even the Catholic novelist of our own time fears to tread.

It will be seen that these stories have undoubtedly 'dated', but they remain extremely readable. They may be melodramatic and extravagant, but they are more durable than the work of many other minor writers who are not inferior to Barbey in talent. Why this is so is well explained by Mr. Quennell, and I cannot do better than quote his words:

'We can never forget that the author had been born, and perhaps remained at heart, a Catholic. Indeed, were it not for the Christian idea of sin, Barbey's picture of human life would lose half its *chiaroscuro*. Catholic writers have this great advantage—that, since they are conscious of the tremendous moral implications of an isolated word or gesture, their vision of life has a heightened quality, an intense dramatic relief, which is often beyond the reach of the matter-of-fact agnostic, whose standards, though possibly more rational, from a literary point of view are sometimes far less stimulating. Everything counts—nothing is trivial or insignificant—in Barbey's curious universe. . . . Lust is elevated to the height of passion; it becomes a ruling motive that carries all before it, not a desultory experiment made by indifferent partners.'

The book is handsomely produced and illustrated by Dodie Masterman's line drawings. The translator's name is not given. Although this version is adequate, it does not appear to have been made recently and seems to exaggerate the old-fashioned air of some of the stories. And why was the translator allowed to substitute a bad

misquotation from one of the most famous passages in *Macbeth* for the original epigraph to 'Beneath the Cards of a Game of Whist'?

MARTIN TURNELL

THE CHURCH CONCILIANT

Soldier of the Spirit. By Michael Carrouges. Translated by Marie-Christine Herin. (Gollancz. 18s.)

Le Croissant n'emportera jamais sur la Croix. M. Bidault's celebrated remark, in which he attempted to justify the Moroccan *coup d'état* of 1953, posed a problem which does not really exist. The conflict between France and the peoples of the Maghreb is political, racial, and economic; it has never been religious. At first sight this may seem strange. Of all religions, Catholicism is the most systematic in proselytizing, Islam, the most ferocious in resisting conversion. When France settled the southern shores of the Mediterranean, how is it that they failed to come into headlong conflict? Colonialism has always been firmly wedded to evangelism. There are sometimes transitory and partial exceptions to this rule—in South America, as that brilliant play, *Sur la Terre Comme au Ciel*, reminded us, the Church occasionally impeded the acquisitive process—but more often the two forms of conquest have been complementary. Indeed, in some cases, as in the Belgian Congo, the Church became a conscious instrument of colonial rule. Like all imperial powers, France was inevitably a great missionary country also, and since the middle of the last century she has produced more than half the staff of the world's Catholic missions. But curiously enough, these battalions of priests and friars and nuns, poured out in their tens of thousands by the great French colleges in the second half of the last century, played only an insignificant role in the process whereby France absorbed the western sector of the Arab world. Missionaries there were, but the act of conquest was exclusively secular. There were no mass-conversions. No great centres of Catholic teaching—as in Hanoi—were established. The Church contented itself with watching, dispensing charity, and catering for the spiritual needs of the French community. In so far as it has played a part in the acquisition of the Maghreb and, today, in its relinquishment, it has been one of conciliation.

Why did the Church adopt this attitude? Charles de Foucauld's life, to some extent at least, provides an answer. Since the war his work has attracted increasing interest in France, but until recently he was little known in this country. This is a pity. During the present century, Catholics in Britain—and even more so in Ireland—have tended to find spiritual precepts almost exclusively in the lives of contemplative

nuns. De Foucauld, though a contemplative, was also, like Loyola, a man of the world and a soldier—a soldier, moreover, in an age when the army was increasingly called upon to discharge political and administrative as well as military functions. In his diaries and letters he brought rare gifts of spiritual analysis to bear on contemporary problems. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Michael Carrouges' biography, the first full-scale life of De Foucauld to become available in English, should make such comparatively little use of his own writings.

Nevertheless, enough of De Foucauld himself emerges to present a convincing picture of his mental and spiritual development. Vicomte Charles de Foucauld was the idle, though likeable, heir to a considerable fortune; at the military academy of St Cyr he was a highly unsatisfactory cadet, though he was later gazetted in a cavalry regiment and saw some service in Algeria during the campaign of 1881. There he became a convert to what might be called the aesthetics of Islam, resigned his commission, and undertook a series of journeys in North Africa, including a long tour, in disguise, of Morocco, which was then forbidden to Christian visitors. He gained a considerable reputation as a geographer and explorer in French academic circles, but eventually abandoned what promised to become a distinguished career by entering a Trappist monastery. It appears that De Foucauld recovered his faith via a spiritual journey into Islam, and, though this may seem a curious route to take, it is one favoured by many Frenchmen who have lived in North Africa. France has brought the Maghreb roads and railways and factories, but the invisible exports of mind and sense—the deepening of vision and feeling which changes men's lives even more effectively—have also flowed in the reverse direction, as indeed they did in the early Middle Ages. By this I do not mean that Islam has won converts or that the Koran has dominated the Sorbonne, but simply that contact with Islamic civilization acts as a catalyst on the French mind and enables it to fulfil itself. Camus is a product of Islam as much as of France. It is not surprising, therefore, that De Foucauld, having found Christianity via Islam, discovered that his spiritual life would not carry on under its own momentum. He lived as a hermit in Syria and Palestine, but he was drawn back inexorably to the Maghreb. When the French penetration of the Saharan interior reached the Touareg country, he followed the advance guards of the army and set up a hermitage in the Hoggar mountains, the high, dead centre of the continent. There, in 1915, he was murdered. He failed, in his own lifetime, to set up a community based on the spiritual rule he himself drew up, but since his death a small group known as the Little Brothers of Jesus has followed his example, and more recently they have been joined by a party of nuns.

De Foucauld and his successors found in North Africa the means to

pursue their quest for humility and spiritual isolation. But De Foucauld was not content with this role; he also saw himself as an intermediary between two conflicting civilizations, a man who could combine knowledge of what France has to offer the Maghreb—and which, at that stage at least, the Maghreb was only too anxious to receive—with respect for what the Maghreb has to offer itself. He did not attempt to make converts, and he urged on his military colleagues that the continuance of French rule would depend on the extent to which they had the will to fulfil their obligations as a protecting power. Shortly before the First World War he wrote, with remarkable prescience:

The North West African Empire of France, which was sealed by the taking over of Morocco and the unification of Algeria with the Sudan by means of the occupation of the Sahara, will be a source of power or of weakness for France according to whether it will be well or badly administered. It has thirty million inhabitants; as a result of peace this number will be doubled in fifty years. It will then be in full material progress, rich, lined with railroads, peopled with inhabitants trained in the handling of our arms, used to our discipline, and whose elite will have been taught in our schools. If we have not learnt to attach these people to us they will drive us away. Not only will we lose the whole of this empire, but the unity which we have given to it, and which it possesses for the first time since the world began, will turn against us; it will be hostile, dangerous and savage against us.

De Foucauld felt, in fact, that France could maintain her presence in North Africa only if the majority of its inhabitants were ready to welcome her, and that such a welcome would be extended only so long as France was prepared to preserve the separate identity of the two communities and construct their interrelationship on a basis of mutual respect. This was a profoundly Christian view, and it was one shared, to a very great extent, by the Church as a whole. But the French State, under the pressure of *colon* opinion, rejected it, and the breakdown which De Foucauld foresaw came to pass. In the present crisis, therefore, the Church had no logical alternative but to prolong its role of intermediary into the no-man's-land of a civil war. It is no accident that the Catholic liberals of Algeria have been the most effective and persistent champions of a negotiated settlement, and have become the object of hatred—and indeed violence—for extremists on both sides. It was no accident, either, that the Cardinals and Archbishops of France, in their recent statement on the Algerian troubles, firmly rejected the pathetic bigotry of M. Bidault and appealed to both sides to exercise moderation. Perhaps the Church's increasingly radical attitude to the problems of colonialism is a reflexion of the swing of the centre of gravity of world Catholicism away from the white peoples of Western

Europe; but it is also, and more particularly, a continuation of a tradition established by the French Church in North Africa—a tradition of which Charles de Foucauld was the outstanding champion.

PAUL JOHNSON

CORPORAL WORKS

Abbé Pierre and the Ragpickers. By Boris Simon. (Harvill Press. 15s.)

Ragman's City. By Boris Simon. (Harvill Press. 18s.)

Abbé Pierre Speaks. A Collection of his talks, broadcast and otherwise. (Sheed & Ward. 12s. 6d.)

SOME two years ago, at a packed meeting at the Central Hall, Westminster, the Abbé Pierre, who only a few months earlier had leapt to fame as a result of his work for the homeless and destitute in Paris, reminded his audience that the greater the poverty, the more difficult it was to discover. The dignity of the poor, '*l'éminente dignité des pauvres*' according to Bossuet, the natural modesty of unfortunate men and women make them ashamed of revealing to the happy, the comfortable and the rich, the depth of their own misery. Only a few dedicated people such as Sisters of Charity and members of the S.V.P., those who remember that to give to the poor is to give to Christ, and who search for Him in the slums of the great cities of Western Europe, can tell how much destitution still exists where not only the tourist and the casual visitor, but even the well-to-do resident can see nothing but signs of bursting prosperity.

The story of the Abbé Pierre's search for and discovery of the appalling distress and poverty existing in modern Paris, as told in Boris Simon's *Abbé Pierre and the Ragpickers*, is more exciting and fascinating than any modern novel. Readers of this book, and of its sequel, *Ragman's City*, cannot help being struck by the resemblance between the Abbé Pierre and the saintly founder of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Frédéric Ozanam. Both are products of the vigorous Catholicism of the city of Lyons, both come from families of the well-to-do bourgeoisie, and in both cases their vocation as men of charity was inspired in early childhood by the example of their fathers, who, true to the finest traditions of the Catholic laity, considered themselves as servants of the poor. Both of them were greatly influenced by the example of St Francis (the Abbé Pierre started his religious life as a Capuchin) and both of them shocked their fellow-Catholics by the extreme vigour of their radical political opinions. Ozanam was considered in his day by the timid as a dangerous revolutionary, and the Abbé Pierre, who lost his seat in the French Chamber because he resigned from the M.R.P. in order to help found a more radical group,

was at one time looked upon by many as an extremist 'Red Christian'. Ozanam has been drowned in a flood of treacle by his biographers, so that most people think of him today as a dull little man who spent his life delivering pious platitudes. It is to be hoped that the parallel will end here, and on this account Sheed and Ward are specially to be congratulated on their enterprise in bringing out an excellent translation of the Abbé Pierre's speeches, as they help us, as nothing else could have done, to understand the mind and thought of a very great man.

The famous Emmaus colony did not start during the terrible winter of 1954. It began much earlier, when the Abbé Pierre, searching for somewhere to live, hired a huge ramshackle villa on the outskirts of Paris and collected round him, simply through the magnetism of his burning charity, a crowd, not of tramps, but of unfortunates of all kinds, who through the circumstances of war or other misfortunes had had their lives broken. It was the very poorest amongst the poor who began to help the poor. The Abbé Pierre lost his seat in the Chamber and his salary, and driven by the force of despair, he and his little band of companions began to search the refuse dumps of Paris, in order to feed their ever-growing colony out of the waste of the big city.

But this extraordinary sight did not move the world out of its complacency, and those who bothered at all about the Abbé, considered him a futile or dangerous crank, according to taste. One left-wing doctrinaire, M. Simon tells us, denounced him for 'weakening the fighting strength of the proletariat' by endeavouring to 'replaster the rotten edifice of modern society', whilst an indignant lady (surely a lineal descendant of Bloy's Mme Tuptarle), the value of whose villa was being seriously reduced by the neighbourhood of Emmaus, certainly spoke in the name of many when she muttered on being shown the door by an unimpressed Abbé: 'Worker-priest! Communist! Anarchist!'

It needed much more than all this; it needed the help of Heaven itself, as well as an extraordinary flair for the skilful use of all the modern methods of publicity, to shake the well-to-do and the comfortable middle-classes out of their torpor, their '*bonne conscience*'. The whole extraordinary story, surely one of the most amazing in the annals of Christian charity, is told with moving and dramatic eloquence in *Abbé Pierre Speaks* and in *Ragman's City*. On the night of 3 January 1954, whilst a bored Assembly was turning down as 'unpractical' an emergency housing programme, a little baby belonging to a family which the Emmaus colony was trying to house, died of cold in a derelict car. Driven by fury, the Abbé Pierre telephoned the Minister of Reconstruction and invited him to the funeral. The Minister came. 'It was,' said the Abbé, 'a national funeral, a funeral of national shame.'

The cold became more and more intense, and it at last forced the homeless poor out of their miserable shelters. But still no one could see

or wanted to see what the Abbé Pierre saw. 'Every evening,' he said, 'when I came back to Paris with the trucks, after doing a day's rag-picking, I saw more and more men on the pavements near the Gare de Lyon and the Gare d'Austerlitz crouching over the warm ventilators. You could see them in the centre of the town in front of the ventilators of the shops at ten or eleven o'clock at night, trying to get a little warmth from the central heating system inside.' And he was to discover even worse horrors in the heart of the *ville lumière*, the city of pleasure. One night he came across what appeared to be a pile of rubbish, but under the sacks and rags he discovered two old blind men, almost dying!

At last he could bear it no longer. On a television programme he scrapped a talk he had been asked to give and described instead the horrors he had witnessed. 'But after all,' he cried, 'Monsieur le Président of the Municipal Council of Paris, you have pounds for stray dogs, can't you do as much for the men who are dying on our pavements?' Forcing his way into the National Radio station and into Radio Luxembourg, he described how, the night before, at three in the morning, a woman had died, frozen to death on the Boulevard Sebastopol, clasping in her hand an eviction order. 'Every night,' he added, 'more than two thousand people crouch down in the streets in the frost, without a roof over their heads or bread to eat. Many of them are half naked.'

As everyone now knows, the result of this impassioned appeal was tremendous. It provoked one of the most extraordinary outbursts of generosity that the world has ever known. The conscience of the entire French people, of the whole world in fact, had been stirred as rarely before. Money and gifts simply poured in, and in a month and a half no less than five hundred million francs (half a million pounds) had been collected for the homeless and the destitute. Men and women of all creeds and parties forgot their differences and their hatreds and united to help this modest little priest who because he had followed the precepts of his Master had become overnight a national hero.

The dramatic events of 1954 have caused the work of the Abbé Pierre to progress by leaps and bounds. What until then had been the desperate venture of a few down-and-outs to help themselves, has now become a national movement. But he would scornfully reject the suggestion that the movement he has started can be a substitute for a proper Government housing programme. He sees himself, to use his own words, as a flea hopping out of a ragpicker's dustbin right on to the Housing Minister's desk, biting him and shouting: 'Do your job! Wake up!' And as a result of his efforts, France's disgraceful post-war building record, the result of political ineffectiveness, selfish private interests and public indifference, has now notably improved.

When *Abbé Pierre and the Ragpickers* first appeared, a reviewer in the

News Chronicle asked 'What makes this man good?' The answer, surely, is a simple one. He has followed the advice of our Lord to the rich young man and has left all to follow his Master, endeavouring to model his life as closely as possible upon the Gospel. Above all, he has been mindful of our Lord's teaching that what we do to the least of our brethren, we do to Him; and that it is on this, and this *alone* that we will be judged on Judgement Day. He has no time for those who quibble about whether it is really necessary to humanize the poor before Christianizing them. 'Man has a soul,' he says, 'but before preaching to him about it, see that he has a shirt on his back and a roof over his head. Later one can explain to him what's inside.'

A parliamentary colleague of the Abbé Pierre said once that to walk with him through the streets of Paris was the most extraordinary experience of his life. Passers-by gasped, midinettes dropped their parcels, soldiers stood to attention, policemen dropped their batons and forgot to direct the traffic; everything stopped as he passed by. 'Surely,' said the politician, 'no Frenchman has ever been so popular.' The Abbé Pierre smiled and murmured, 'Perhaps de Gaulle.' But it is natural for the French to hero-worship their great soldiers. The remarkable and significant fact about the Abbé Pierre is that in a country where the working masses are still deeply hostile to the Church, a priest should have become a universally acknowledged national hero.

JAMES LANGDALE

GRANDEUR ET SERVITUDE

Charles de Gaulle: Mémoires de Guerre. L'Unité 1942-44. (Paris, Plon. 1956.)

THE year 1942, with which the second volume of General de Gaulle's *Memoirs* begins, was in various ways significant. The first phase of the history of Free France (dealt with in *L'Appel 1940-1942*¹) was mainly military. Its ideological note was determined by Thierry d'Argenlieu, at present the Carmelite Père Louis de la Trinité, in those days a Commander in the French Navy. Its symbol was the Cross of Joan of Arc, its character was mainly Catholic and traditionalist, and remained so, even after the Communists changed sides and joined the Resistance in 1941, on account of Hitler's attack on Russia. A transformation took place in July 1942 with the arrival of M. André Philip, Professor at the University of Lyons, in London. This meant the reappearance of the old groups of the Third Republic, the parties of Herriot and Léon Blum. The Third Republic abdicated at Vichy in July 1940, when the deputies—mostly elected as men of the Front Populaire of 1936—voted full powers to the group which covered itself with the name of Marshal

¹ Paris, Plon. 1954.

Pétain. When General de Gaulle analyses the transformation of 1942, he is in command of more than his usual restraint; he gives a loyal appreciation of the honourable men who shared in his struggle. He has perhaps already forgotten the devastating view many of his companions, military men or colonial Frenchmen, took of the regime which collapsed after the catastrophe, or perhaps he states only part of his case against it, out of generosity. When all the memoirs of the persons involved have been written and all the archives opened, a 'final' history of the French crisis of 1940-45 may one day be written, although M. Jacques Soustelle, one of the principal assistants of General de Gaulle,¹ may be right, that 'it is never the moment to write history', for to do so ten or twenty years after the events, when public opinion is still divided and prejudiced, is too soon, while thirty or forty years later, in the face of almost universal oblivion, is too late to correct the inveterate prejudices that subsist after critical events. M. Soustelle, an archeologist by profession, proposed in his book in 1950 that we should leave the issue to his colleagues, who 'in two thousand years' time may eagerly discuss whether Adolf Hitler was a real person, or a solar myth'. Yet, if the historian has a word to say between the reporter and the archeologist (and perhaps General de Gaulle, a former professor of military history at St Cyr, thinks that he has) he is mainly interested in finding out how two hostile parliamentary groups, both of them consisting of adaptable politicians rather than of men of principle, carried out in the midst of the worst national defeat in their history what Barrès called *l'appel au soldat* and how, by so doing, they managed to survive, and in due course to come back, with all their inherited parliamentary routine, and the elasticity, if not the emptiness, of their vague general ideas.

Ever since 1918, the French scene has been dominated by a kind of pacifism, more anarchical than democratic, which denies the primacy of national interests, or else assimilates them to some general philosophy. The actual framework of French politics was democracy, but some politicians were more pacifist than democratic, while others were more democratic than pacifist. They shared an increasingly vague ideological inheritance from 1789, and in this respect the war of 1914-18 changed little. The first type of politician were ready to come to terms with Mussolini and Hitler, the second were ready to fight them, but in order to defend Democracy, not France. Only military men judged politics according to concepts of a peculiar national interest, which might coincide or conflict with the permanent and traditional interests attributed to other nations. General de Gaulle remains the great prototype of the Army generation which was young in 1914 and shared this way of thought. The older Army generation, Pétain and Weygand,

¹ Jacques Soustelle: *Envers et Contre Tout*. Souvenirs et Documents de la France Libre. Robert Laffont Sources. Vol. I., 1947. Vol. II., 1950.

were usually conservative—in the traditional ‘paternalist’ sense—and did not represent a definite doctrine of national policy, such as Albert Sorel, Jacques Bainville and others outlined it in their historical writing between 1870 and 1918. Almost every page of General de Gaulle’s *Memoirs* proves what a lifelong impression the historico-political axioms, new on the eve of 1914, left on his mind. The *raison d’état* and similar concepts, taken perhaps from Albert Sorel, Bainville and even Maurras (whose name the General significantly avoids when he is criticizing sharply the men of Vichy, although the old nationalist doctrine played a considerable part there) recur whenever he attempts a theoretical justification of his line of conduct. He interpreted the issues of the 1930’s and the Second World War in terms of permanent national policies, not in the new terms of an international civil strife and social revolution. He belonged to the school of thought for which Hitler was a new incarnation of ‘eternal Prussia’, while Stalin represented a Russian expansionism which was less immediately dangerous to French interests, although de Gaulle, as a Catholic soldier and a man of Western civilization, held Communism in aversion.

It is the most striking paradox of recent French history that while the coherence of the ‘Left’ parties was created by their opposition to the Army in the days of Boulanger and the *Affaire*, one part of the ‘Left’ governed under Marshal Pétain and another part of it under General de Gaulle, both more effectively, not to say more absolutely than before. Pétain’s Ministers and chief associates, Déat, Marquet, Spinasse Frossard, were pacifist Socialists all their lives. For the sake of peace and Socialism, they did not mind sacrificing some amount of the democratic forms to which, as old Marxists believing institutions to be a mere ‘superstructure of economics’, they were anyhow not too keenly attached. The cynical Laval had by 1940–45 no more convictions left; in his sociological type and what we may call his sentimental background, he remained none the less the materialist Socialist that he was in his youth. Socialists would do well to imitate de Gaulle who, in his determination to be fair, sees a ‘porte entr’ouverte sur le pardon’ (p. 299) in the case of Laval, although he attributes patriotic motives to him, rather than Socialist-pacifist ones, which the present writer thinks more probable. The para-military groups in Vichy’s service were animated by a curious mystique. Their leader, Doriot, was an ex-Communist, hating his former party no doubt, but professing nonetheless a social-revolutionary violence as his creed. The conservative element in Vichy administered rather than governed the regime and the doctrinaire ‘right-wing’, with Maurras, practised a sort of indirect influence on the Marshal’s military entourage, but was ignored by Laval and the politicians, and outrivalled by the younger intellectual sects, such as Brasillach and his paper *Je suis partout*. Real power remained in the hands of the professional politicians. They were determined to out-

live the Marshal, and tried, as General de Gaulle tells us, to 'legalize' the latter's entry into Paris in August 1944 by convoking the old Chamber under Herriot's presidency—and on Laval's initiative. The powers granted to the Marshal would have been formally withdrawn and powers would have been granted to the General, more or less according to Lafayette's scheme of 1814-15, when the Imperial Senate and the *Corps Législatif* destituted Napoleon and created a new constitutional legality with a Royal figurehead, in view of the European changes in the fortunes of war.

On the other hand, the old Radical and Socialist parties were revived around General de Gaulle by the presence of André Philip, Cassin, Pierre Bloch, Mendès-France and others in London and Algiers. A significant fact is that the French overseas dependencies not only tried not to break away, but that they kept strong ties with France, some with Pétain, others with de Gaulle; indeed, there is no reason to believe that the anti-European tendency is unanimous in Africa and that European prestige has gone for ever, much as the former links between Africa and Europe are undergoing transformation. France was in two camps, in Europe as well as overseas, but General de Gaulle's was the stronger cause. Bold and daring, the exaltation of honour can always be excused. 'Realism' cannot be, if events prove it to be wrong, as they did when, contrary to Vichy's expectations, Nazi Germany lost the war. Realists who have miscalculated suffer dishonour and ridicule; heroes who fail may be entitled to admiration.

Yet it was no easy matter for the General to keep the leadership. He had unexpectedly to put up a stubborn fight against his allies, which occupies a considerable portion of the book, and which he relates with remarkable impartiality. He thinks that 'suddenly changing over from isolation to the opposite extreme of world leadership', America was determined to treat France as a minor and subordinate auxiliary, whose affairs were judged in terms of expediency. '*Civilization occidentale*' was a concept which had no appeal for Roosevelt, as he explained at great length when de Gaulle visited the White House in July 1944. That France had any special claim for its own sake was an idea strange to the President. He conceived his vision on a world scale; only America and Russia counted for him and he hoped for Chinese and Indian support to force Russia into a lasting association with the U.S. This casts a new light on American policy and the fact that Britain found little to contradict such a conception, but on the contrary tried to get rid of the burden of Free France to please America, is a sad thing to register. It is, however, explained by the General and once more without bitterness or resentment. At Dakar in 1940, in Syria in 1941 and in Madagascar in 1942, the name de Gaulle proved to be of little use in rallying French territories. Besides this, judging things from a French point of view, General de Gaulle could not support British

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¹ Ja
1948.

plans for a Balkan campaign, but preferred the American strategy envisaging a decision in the West. Britain began, therefore, to discount Free France as a useful support for British aims.

The 'expediency' set up by the Americans at Algiers in November 1942 might easily have served the Communists in its consequences; General de Gaulle sums up the nomination and death of Darlan under the title *Tragédie* and the subsequent events under the heading *Comédie*. The Communists had the greatest interest in monopolizing the national resistance in France, and while they had in General de Gaulle a rival in a strong position, General Giraud and other nondescript military chiefs, or ex-Vichy officials, would have fallen easy victims to the eliminating manoeuvres planned in the Muscovite spirit, with the usual skill and thoroughness. De Gaulle alone was in a position to prevent this, but at the price of tolerating a great deal. Communist intrigues first set in, followed by violence and excesses in some regions over which the Allies had lost control, despite the fact that de Gaulle had entered Paris and set up a national government presided over by himself. There is little doubt de Gaulle's was the only possible authority in France in the summer of 1944, but unfortunately this was badly undermined by his own Allies.

The end of the story is not yet told. General de Gaulle stops in August 1944, as did M. Soustelle in his account. There is a 'gaulliste' version of the General's break with the political parties by M. Debu-Bridel,¹ but we eagerly await the General's own statement concerning events between August 1944 and January 1946, his retirement from power. He ends his story of 1942-44 with the words: '*Pour ce qui est des rapports humains, mon lot est la solitude.*'

As yet the most striking lesson seems to be that both Vichy and the de Gaulle side handed the destinies of the country back to the old parties and their men (one new party, the M.R.P. and a few new men were added to them, but this was possibly a questionable improvement) and both had to renounce the idea of a wholesale national regeneration under the symbols of military tradition and Christian spirituality and morality. The Republic and its parties were restored, but by force of habit and inertia rather than by the *élan vital* of Republican ideas and convictions. This does not, however, alter the fact that General de Gaulle will appear in history as a figure of major moral stature, whose aims were nobler than his times, a depository of a patriotism which a United Europe will take for its foundation. For this United Europe will identify itself with the idea of the Christian Occident; it will grow out of national destinies and will not suppress the values of the past.

BÉLA MENCZER

¹ Jacques Debu-Bridel: *La naissance de la IV^e République*, Paris, Aimery-Somogy, 1948.

STATE OF THE NATION

The State of France. By Herbert Lüthy. (Secker and Warburg. 35s.)

THERE can hardly be a nation in the world which lives so much with its history as the French. Not one English sixth-form schoolboy in a hundred could name the day in 1832 on which the Reform Act became law. Any Frenchman with the least pretence to education would have such a date on the tip of his tongue. He would need only two words to explain the distrust the Left felt for de Gaulle once the honeymoon of the Liberation was over: 2 December. A similar formula would explain his unwillingness to see the executive provided with power to dissolve Parliament: 16 May. He would assume as naturally his companions' knowledge of the first date as the day in 1851 when Louis Napoleon Bonaparte carried out his *coup d'état* and of the second as the day in 1877 on which President MacMahon dissolved a Parliament he disliked as he would their identification of the particular 4 September which gives its name to the street that leads out of the Place de l'Opera.

One is sometimes a little astonished that a people which has its history so much on the tip of its tongue should display so little capacity for learning from it. The gibe that was hurled at the post-Restoration Bourbons fits the politicians of the Fourth Republic every bit as justly. Twice since the end of the war, France has been stripped of an overseas possession which competent statesmanship should have had not the least difficulty in keeping for her. Morocco was lost through much the same weaknesses as Indo-China: the inability of the Ministers in Paris to choose between conflicting policies, or to impose their will on the officials on the spot, and their unwillingness to inform Parliament of the full facts and to demand of it the necessary sacrifices. The lesson of the two stories is perfectly clear. Yet for almost the same set of reasons, Algeria is being suffered today to go the same way as Morocco and Indo-China, and Algeria is often referred to as the corner-stone of the French Empire.

To those who remain confounded by the political incoherence of a nation which prides itself on its logic, and who ask themselves by what miracle France continues to survive the attentions of her statesman, one cannot do better than recommend Dr Lüthy's book. The author is a Swiss newspaper correspondent in Paris, but he is not one of those journalists who content themselves with cutting off lengths from their diary and calling the product a political study. He knows that a people can only be understood through its past, but he also has an unerring eye for what in that past is significant. The result is one of those rare portraits of a people, as affectionate as it is understanding, which

enable one to comprehend what Nietzsche meant when he called justice 'love with seeing eyes'.

For Dr Lüthy, it was not 'forty kings who made France', but thirty generations of administrative and judicial officials. 'For generations,' he writes—for the incoherence did not date from yesterday—'France has been seeking for a workable system of government without finding it; and the observer who looks only at the political façade asks in bewilderment how a country can possibly manage to survive in such a condition, let alone preserve an international status. Is not the answer that it is because the administration works with such consummate smoothness that the only field left to the politician is that of ideology?'

If Frenchmen have learned so little from their history, Dr Lüthy would say, that is because the history which is so constantly on their lips is in fact a mythology. The one battle cry which can be counted on to rally the Left, and which is constantly being raised on the most incongruous pretexts, is the cry that 'the Republic is in danger'. 'The republic which is continually in danger, because it has never existed,' Dr Lüthy writes, 'consists of the principles of 1789, the rights of man, liberty, equality and fraternity. . . . The great Revolution and the little ones which followed it have left in their wake the myth of the uncompleted revolution, which comes continually into conflict with the legitimacy of any existing social order. . . . Thus the great national drama continues to be acted with barely altered costumes and back-cloth, and in . . . formulas which have little to do with the present and its problems.'

Meantime, 'the opposite pole of (the Frenchman's) high-flying ideology is not a responsible, realistic conservatism—France has never known a great conservative party—but a teeming multitude of local and sectional interests'. Moreover, France's thorough-going centralism and the suppression of all local self-administration have left local interests with no outlet through which to express themselves other than the national Parliament. Thus the pathetic picture Robert de Jouvenel drew forty-odd years ago of the Finance Minister and his proposed tax on pianos could as easily happen today as it could have in 1913. The Minister (lovers of the *République des Camarades* will remember) pleads that the tax is not only essential if the budget is to be balanced; it is a democratic measure. Everyone is in favour of it.

'Only, of course,' the Socialists interpose, 'professional musicians will have to be exempted.'

'And dancing masters too,' retort the Radicals, who represent the middle classes.

Other voices chime in all round the Chamber. 'We'll have to exempt the parents of three children.' 'And families who have a son with the colours.' 'Those who've spent ten years in the colonies.' 'Teachers.' 'Wine-merchants.'

Finally, the tax on pianos is voted by an enormous majority. Unfortunately, there is nobody left to pay it.

Obviously, such a Parliament as this will be incapable of controlling its proconsuls overseas. M. Robert Schuman, who as Foreign Minister was for four years responsible for France's North African protectorates, admitted as much in a 1953 interview which Dr Lüthy quotes. 'We have not been able to choose any policy for North Africa,' M. Schuman said, 'and if we had chosen one, I fear that in the present state of the French administration and its relations with the home country, it would be impossible to carry it out. . . . Do you know it is sometimes impossible to transfer an official who has failed to carry out instructions in the sense that was desired?'

There are moments when the friendly critic of French ways will be made to feel ashamed of his criticisms. He may find himself blushing when French spokesmen point to the very real achievements which France has put to her credit since the Liberation. The French railways suffered far more from the war than did the English. Today, they are not only far more comfortable: their expresses are the fastest in the world. Lorraine can boast of a rolling mill that is the most modern in Europe: the power plant at the Génissiat Dam is the biggest on the continent. Unfortunately, as Dr Lüthy points out, 'if one searches for effects which the tremendous constructive achievements of the French key industries have had on the daily life of France, they all seem to run away between one's fingers. . . . The French workman's wages are sufficient to enable him to eat and to pay his rent, if he belongs to the privileged class of "old tenants", who live absurdly cheaply in slowly collapsing houses at rents which are kept down by law. If he is not one of these favoured "old tenants", whose lease has become a kind of perpetual right of usufruct, he is unable to make ends meet.' Moreover, the rights of the 'old tenants' are only one of a whole system of guaranteed established privileges, which are parasitic on the real productive forces of the nation. The French State, to take what is only the grossest of the many examples, pays tens of millions of pounds every year to the producers of unwanted wine, apples and beetroot to turn them into equally useless alcohol.

If there is a complaint to be made of this profound and brilliant book, it is that its author is too optimistic. Only one thing, he writes, stands between France and her health, her costs of production; 'not the technical productive costs of her industry, but those of her economic and social structure, the production costs of a guaranteed *douceur de vivre* which for the great majority of her people has long become illusory'. Dr Lüthy, one has the impression, thinks that France can and may correct these costs. Writing towards the end of the 'Mendès-France experiment', he says: 'After this demonstration of dynamism, it will be difficult to return to certain habits of *immobilisme*.' Morocco

was lost, through *immobilisme*, barely a year after Mendès-France had shown, in Tunisia, how decisiveness pays. It is the pessimists, today, who are most likely to be right about the future of France.

RONALD MATTHEWS

MAJESTIC CANVAS

The French Nation from Napoleon to Pétain. By D. W. Brogan. (Hamish Hamilton. 25s.)

JUST at the beginning of the war of 1939-45 Professor Brogan finished his monumental, unflagging, coruscating, 700-page narrative of the development of the Third Republic. It was published in June 1940, the month in which the Third Republic collapsed, thus conveniently making *The Development of Modern France* the indispensable volume on all the varied aspects of a period that had closed. Now Professor Brogan has taken a wider period in shorter compass—300 pages—and has performed an even more dazzling *tour de force* of lucid compression, with illuminating parentheses performing the work usually less well done by laborious footnotes, in which immense erudition, ripeness of judgement, wit and wide-ranging sympathies are blended into a long draught of pure champagne. This is a book for connoisseurs: and those who humbly reckon themselves in lesser categories will derive exhilaration, not only from the immense expansion of their information and horizons but also from the fact that the connoisseurs among Professor Brogan's readers are also undergoing the same stimulating educative process. *La chair est lasse et j'ai lu tous les livres*: no line was ever more false and true when applied to D. W. Brogan.

The book is peopled and alive with the personalities who made and unmade the Restoration and the Monarchy of July, the Second Republic, the Empire and the Third Republic: here they are, men and women, the great and near-great and the nonentities, the prelates and the *mangeurs de curés*; and their deeds and sayings, ambitions, schemes, plots, hopes, failures, successes. Macaulay's *History* sold like a novel; so did Lamartine's; but they have not survived in historical reputation. Professor Brogan's narrative is one which Balzac himself would have envied for its zest; and it ought certainly to sell like a novel if it is translated into French, as it ought to be, for the French nation and its leaders would learn a great deal from this story of its glories and follies.

Here, for almost the only time in general history, is to be found the story of the various Catholic personalities and their impact—or lack of it—on the society of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Bonald and de Maistre, Lammenais, Lacordaire, Ozanam, Falloux, Quélen

Darboy, Dupanloup, the Curé d'Ars, St. Bernadette, St. Thérèse, Léon Harmel, Marc Sangnier, Maritain, Claudel, Péguy. There are asides to start us reflecting on why the Society of St Vincent de Paul failed to do more in the evolution of positive Catholic social doctrine—though I am not convinced that Professor Brogan gives weight to Ozanam's quite brilliant analysis of the ills of industrialism in his *Course of Commercial Law* in Lyons in 1840. However, Ozanam did not live long enough to recapitulate and develop his thinking; and Catholic intellectual circles continued—and still remain—surprisingly uninformed or uninterested in that aspect of his life. There is a lively and just account of the great missionary effort in the French colonies (and the account of the controversies over the first conquest of Algeria remind us yet again that French quarrels are always old quarrels which would so often be better forgotten).

One might also ask for a little more space in the treatment of *le Ralliement* (but then we would ask for so much more on so many more topics that production costs would be trebled). Admittedly this attempt to rescue the Catholics from their sterile and internecine warring was wrecked, as Professor Brogan says, by the fact that the Dreyfus *affaire* split them (and every other group) hopelessly amongst themselves and (in their great majority) from the Republic—to the greater content of the Republicans like Combes. But *le Ralliement* was not mainly or even primarily designed to reconcile Catholics with the Republic: it was a call to them to co-operate with the Republic (since it was clearly going to endure for some time)—but within that general attitude of co-operation Leo XIII wanted the Catholics to fight unitedly against the threat of the most militant anti-clericals against the Catholic schools. It failed, owing to partisan passions, out-of-date habits of political struggle, much stupidity; but most of all to the concatenation of events (the *Affaire*)—and the rancour of Combes and his troops. There was even less desire among the anti-clericals for *le Ralliement* than there was among the Catholics. And so when Pius X came to the Holy See *le Ralliement* was already a failure as a shock short-term tactic; and the Pope, like Mr. Dooley, had to recognize that, whereas one can tactfully refuse some offers from others, if they want to fight you you simply must oblige them. Professor Brogan seems to me a little less willing than is his habit to face the realities of the changed situation which confronted Pius X and less than fair to the Pope, to whose importance for this century Pius XII has devoted four important and decisive texts; Pius X's attitude is completely in accordance with the various texts of Leo XIII on *le Ralliement*. (Professor Brogan here seems to be adopting the thesis of M. Dansette; and it will not stand—indeed has not stood—critical examination.) But how infinitely more sensible Professor Brogan is on the general history of the nineteenth-century Catholicism than some contemporary French Catholic historians!

The present narrative stops at the defeat of 1940; which must encourage us with the hope that Professor Brogan will continue his history into that critical and terrible decade which saw the dark night of Occupation and the euphoria of the Liberation, the heroism of the Resistance and the abjection of '*résistantialisme*'. There are some changes of emphasis in Professor Brogan's latest references to certain of the figures of the 'thirties and of 1940—such as Pétain, Weygand, Laval, and others—from those he recorded in *The Development of Modern France*. No historian is more free than he from the historical sin of hind-sight; and though the chronicler who suspends his narrative in 1940 must, to however small extent, take into consideration what we know of the actors in that drama during the acts which followed June 1940, it seems to me that Professor Brogan's earlier comments are a juster basis for the consideration of the development of the events of 1940-50, and the characters of the men who had to play out their fatal roles like the characters in a Greek tragedy.

FRANK MACMILLAN

SHORTER NOTICES

Politics in Post-War France. By Philip Williams. (Longmans. Second Impression. 1955. 30s.)

The Pursuit of Freedom. By Pierre Mendès-France. (Longmans. 1956. 18s.)

MANY works have been published on the French political system since J. E. C. Bodley's classic two volumes in 1898. Professor Denis Brogan issued his masterly historical survey (*The Development of Modern France*) in 1940. Mr Alexander Werth has for the last twenty years interpreted the changing political scene in a series of sparkling volumes. The detailed analysis, the clothing of the bare bones of statistics, the essential factual background for the serious student can be found in Philip Williams's *Politics in Post-War France*.

Mr Williams is an Oxford History Lecturer—accurate, objective, and almost over-scrupulous in his judgements. He describes himself as a supporter of the moderate wing of the Labour Party; but in his discussion of French politics the only personal feeling evident is an obvious love for France and a desire to interpret her favourably. He rightly presents the parties and the policies of today against the background of the Resistance. He then analyses the composition of each party, with the social and geographical areas from which it draws its support, giving lovers of statistics the sort of electoral maps which all serious works on politics ought to contain. He then discusses the Con-

stitution and its various organs and problems, and ends with a valuable interpretative section, 'The Political System', which deals with the realities behind the framework and, in particular, with the influence of such pressure groups as the *Bouilleurs du Cru*.

He very rightly affirms the essential stability of French politics, in which Premiers may change, but in which there is often less switching of office-holders than in Great Britain or the United States. We have at Westminster had five Ministers of Defence and three Foreign Secretaries within a couple of years, whereas French Foreign policy was, save for one month, in the hands of two men and a single political group, the M.R.P., for the ten years from 1944. Successive cabinets show a remarkable continuity, the majority being based on some twenty political leaders, serving regularly. The municipal administration—still, as in Bodley's day, a model to Europe—shows an even more remarkable continuity, mayors (figures of real importance) controlling great cities for thirty, or even fifty, years, and carrying on the tradition of the eighteenth-century '*Intendants*'.

Nor do party politics play so major a role as is often imagined. One great sector of affairs, Mr Williams points out, was removed from party politics from the start: the Monnet Economic Plan, which was accepted even by the Communists. The difficulties of France are, according to Mr Williams, 'due to historical and social, rather than to constitutional and temperamental factors', and especially to the forces making for economic conservatism and to caution both in commerce and politics. 'Responsibility,' he rightly says, 'can only be driven home to parties which govern alone,' and local and sectional interests tend to make the French Deputy a constituency ambassador, lobbying for local and particularist interests. The dislike of the average French elector for strong government produces a permanent tendency for power to revert to parties on the decline. Today there does not appear to be any clear national issue which could act as a catalyst to group together scattered and still largely personal groups.

The influence of 'personalities'—such as Paul Reynaud and Pierre Mendès-France—is still considerable; and the one weakness in Mr Williams's admirable work is that there is no little about individuals. A good account of, for instance, Pierre Mendès-France is much needed; and such biographical studies of contemporary Frenchmen as have appeared recently have not been of much calibre. *The Pursuit of Freedom* is a very light-weight volume written by the ex-Premier when serving with the Free French Air Force fifteen years ago. It is in no sense an autobiography, and tells us little of his political views, though containing some useful chapters on his experiences in 1940. It is primarily a very vivid escape story, telling of his imprisonment and flight from Occupied France. It will, of course, provide material for the future biographer of the most vivid figure in contemporary France, unless he

himself first writes the sort of Keynesian memoirs we might expect as a foil to the solid grandeur of the epic volumes of General de Gaulle.

RICHARD RUSSELL

The Death of the Fourth Republic. By Ronald Matthews. (Eyre & Spottiswoode. 18s.)

MR MATTHEWS was well placed to observe the birth and the first decade of the Fourth Republic, for he entered Paris as a war correspondent with the first Liberators, Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Division, on 25 August 1944. After the war he continued as a special correspondent in Paris of various British newspapers. And in the Spring of 1953, when M. Antoine Pinay came to office as Prime Minister, Mr Matthews realized that 'the obituary notices of the Fourth Republic could safely be sent to Press'—thus his first sentence. His book is the passionate narrative of the death of a dream . . . 'that dream-like atmosphere' of August 1944, when Paris went mad with joy, when Communists and Catholics and Conservatives, Socialists and Radicals, old names and new names—all of them hitherto known only as Resistance pseudonyms—emerged like the underground galley-slaves at Lepanto, 'white for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty'; when men throughout the world who had fought in the victory of 1918 and men who were fighting in the swaying battle of the hinge at Caen shouted the *Mar-seillaise* with tears streaming down their faces—like the people in Paris.

Mr Matthews passionately loves his subject, which is not so much the Fourth Republic as France itself: and his verdicts, even if one disagrees with his arrangement and interpretation of the evidence on which they are based, are comprehensible and sympathetic against the perspective of the bright hopes which we all shared in 1944 and our misgivings and forebodings by the Spring of 1953, some of which have come true while others are still menacing. He writes very close to the events which he witnessed, and this gives his book passion, sincerity—and faith even in disillusion; and above all it gives his *reportage*—as in his description of the atmosphere of Paris in August 1944—a luminous quality which will bring us to its pages when nostalgia compels us. Mr Matthews might have written with wider understanding and compassion if he had reflected on the words of Léon Blum, which he quotes, that though a national disaster must naturally have causes, it is not necessarily a punishment for faults, any more than victory is always a good-conduct prize. That was true at the time of the Riom trials; it was equally true of the time of the trials of Pétain and Laval—and of the victory of the Resistance.

France, 1940-1955. By Alexander Werth. (Robert Hale. 35s.)

THERE is no reason on earth why a partisan history should not be a very readable book. The series of tableaux of the contemporary French political scene which Mr Werth began to bring out in the middle 'thirties were all written from the point of view of the intelligent left wing, yet there are few of us who do not look back on them with gratitude. Alas, in his latest volume he has simply failed to bring it off. *France, 1940-1955*, is 742 pages long. It boasts an ample bibliography. It covers one of the most moving and most tragic periods of France's existence. Yet one has to be urged on by a strong sense of duty to plough through it to the end.

Part of the secret, no doubt, is that the formula that served Mr Werth so well before the war, a series of slices from his day-to-day experiences in Paris, will not work where a longer period is concerned. Part of it is that his left-wing position—its whereabouts may be judged from the fact that he labels Mr Dulles 'Europe's Bully No 1'—is far less sympathetic to a post-war reader. Moreover, his prejudices do not only colour his style: they throw his selection of material seriously out of focus. The 'schools question' was a very important factor in the early life of the Fourth Republic: it ended by breaking up the Third Force type of government. Mr Werth does almost nothing to explain what it was all about, yet he devotes pages to such topics as the Communist 'peace campaign' of the late 'forties, or French reactions to the sentencing and execution of the Rosenbergs in the United States. Few people in 1948 seriously believed in the 'imminence' of a Soviet invasion, he says, in an off-the-cuff judgement. As 1947 went out, a former Resistance leader was telling this reviewer of the enquiries he was then receiving from his one-time followers. What were their instructions and where was their rendezvous to be, they were asking, if the Soviet army should move in?

A Frenchman Examines his Conscience. By Jules Romain. Translated by Cornelia Schaeffer. (André Deutsch. 12s. 6d.)

THERE is one comforting thing about examining one's national conscience; one need never get too involved in it. It is high time that we all, in Western Europe, adopted this most salutary exercise, because we all have very much to clear up, but if it is to be done, it has to be done with personal involvement or else it might as well not be done at all. The *Schuldfrage* is an international problem, and if we are to insist that the Germans are to consider it and apply it to themselves as individual persons, then we of other countries must do the same.

The essence of an examination of conscience is surely to say: What have I done? M. Romain will have none of this. He is content to ask:

What have *they* done? And, after finding, in a somewhat abstracted frame of mind, that all is not going well, he marches in like a doctor with his little black bag and prescribes adequate doses of drugs, without first taking the trouble to find out whether the patient is alive or dead. To stand out of a situation in which one should be involved is bad enough, especially disappointing considering the promising title of the book; but even the analysis of the situation which he sees around him is scarcely worthy of setting down on paper.

In the social field, M. Romaines describes quite accurately the rot which is bringing down the entire social and economic structure; the incompetence of the manufacturers, the excessive number of middlemen, the follies of subsidizing the vine- and beetroot-growers by paying them for their excess production, and above all the criminal practices of tax-evasion, which have risen to an extent undreamed of in this country. His suggested cure is a good stiff dose of constitutional reform; rather as if a doctor prescribed a good brisk massage once *rigor mortis* had set in. France has had enough of constitutional talk; any constitution can work properly, and any one can be a disastrous failure; one has to consider if it is properly geared to the body politic, and one has also to be sure that the dominant force in the body politic is in fact a living one.

If the French are going to examine their consciences, then they must do so with lucidity, and see themselves in a real situation, acting in history with real acts instead of gestures, avoiding the temptation to slip into the meaningless and invalid traditions of a society which has no longer anything new to offer. They must face up to the *trucage* of the electoral law as well as to the *Résistance*, to the piastre scandal, to Duclos and the pigeons, to the presidential elections, and to all the major and minor scandals which have turned Marianne IV into a replica of her predecessor and which M. Romaines has so conveniently ignored. After lucidity, and only then, can we start thinking about a constitution.

Modern France. An Introduction to French Civilization. By F. C. Roe (Longmans. 21s.)

The Culture of France in our Time. Edited by Julian Park. (Cornell University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 40s.)

THESE volumes are both in the nature of text-books. Professor Roe, who is Carnegie Professor of French in the University of Aberdeen, has produced his single-handed, as the result, he tells us, of forty years' study. He divides his book into two parts, the first containing chapters on 'The People', 'Paris', 'The Country', 'France Beyond the Seas' and 'French Institutions', and the second dealing with such subjects as 'Education', 'Science and Inventions', 'Music', 'Painting', 'The Cinema', 'The Theatre' and, finally, 'Literature'. Professor Park,

whose university is that of Buffalo, has set out to cover less ground, and has farmed much of it out to specialists, including the author of the essay on recent French music in this number of *THE DUBLIN REVIEW*. Professor Roe and Professor Park both provide bibliographies, the latter's rather fuller. Every reader will have his own criticisms to make about both volumes. Both contain essays on the theatre, but neither has a word to say about Edmond Rostand. Professor Roe rightly speaks of Scott-Moncrieff's translation as having made an immense difference to the reception of Proust in this country, and it would have been fair, when speaking of the later and not dissimilar welcome accorded to Mauriac, to mention the name of Mr Gerard Hopkins, whose monumental work in translating almost the entire corpus of Mauriac's novels is no less deserving of remembrance.

Professor Roe is remarkably indifferent to the Church, except when he is finding the *écoles libres* difficult to comprehend. 'It has been affirmed,' he writes, 'that a bill for State monopoly of education would inevitably cause the fall of the Government sponsoring it, or might even be the signal for civil war.' But if that is so, and wars of religion are really quite possible, it is curious that religion and the Church should not be thought important enough to receive examination in these pages. Professor Park has a chapter on them, making it clear that he does not much care for the Catholic Church; he regards the Republic's attitude to the Church in the early years of this century as eminently reasonable, and greatly exaggerates the numbers and influence of French Protestants, for the comfort of his readers in the United States. He writes: 'It is safe to estimate that one in five men in positions of leadership in all walks of [French] life today is a Protestant, exercising a strong spiritual as well as social emphasis.' But it is by no means safe to do this.

France: The Fourth Republic. By Dorothy Pickles. (Methuen, Home Study Books. 8s. 6d.)

THE fragmentary and fissiporous political groups which make up the French National Assembly, the doctrines and dislikes which divide them, the interests which ally them, the administrative cadres which sustain the government of the country and occasionally supplant the Government of the day—all these and a score of other manifestations of French political life which baffle the foreign observer and exasperate the average Frenchman are compendiously, accurately and dispassionately catalogued, analysed and explained in Mrs Dorothy Pickles' admirable volume, which deals with the period from the beginning of the Fourth Republic till the first weeks of the Mendès-France administration of the second half of 1954. It is an uncommonly useful introduction to the study of the French political and administrative structure,

dependable in its information and the limited and cautious interpretation which is imposed on the text by its scope and brevity.

The Châteaux of France. By Ralph Dutton. (Batsford. 35s.)

THIS is probably the best short book in English, and certainly the best in print, about the great houses of France, written by a man who knows them well, and illustrated with more than a hundred photographs, most of them good although some too small. Mr Dutton translates '*châteaux*' as country-houses, not as castles, and devotes himself to those built without special regard to the necessities of defence. He knows a great deal about France, especially about the history of France, and a great deal also about architecture, and his book, we hope, will be a companion for many a wandering Englishman for years to come.

England's Tribute to the Architects and Craftsmen of France. By John Swarbrick. (The Wykeham Press.)

THIS is a brochure (48 pp.), and even with the added importance of a foreword from the pen of an ex-president of the Royal Academy is perhaps hardly up to the weight of its imposing title. It is, however, a well-merited tribute to the two great Master Masons, as they called themselves, or architects as we would term them today, Guillaume de Sens and Henri de Reims. Maître Guillaume was responsible for the reconstruction of Canterbury after the fire of 1174, and Maître Henry built Westminster Abbey. And lest such statements should arouse any xenophobic feeling it is pointed out that both men bequeathed to English successors the carrying on of the half-finished work when they themselves were forced to lay down the burden. But the debt is a heavy one and Mr Swarbrick has done well to remind us of it. Not the least interesting part of the story are the extracts from the Chronicle of Gervase (1185) dealing with the aforementioned fire and the rebuilding of the cathedral which followed it. These extracts are taken from a translation made in 1845 by a certain Rev R. Willis of Cambridge University. At one point we read that St Thomas of Canterbury's body was the object of 'worship' on the part of pilgrims to his shrine.

The text is illustrated by twenty-one excellent reproductions of architectural drawings and photographs.

Nihil obstat: JOANNES M. T. BARTON, S.T.D., L.S.S., *Censor Deputatus.*

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